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ABSTRACT

The report is the result of a 1981 research project commissioned by Australia's Commonwealth Department of Education to investigate early childhood education for Aborigines. The study encompassed the care and education of Aboriginal children from age 0 to age 5 in government and non-government school systems. The report is divided into three major sections. The first presents an examination of the history of early childhood education and Aboriginal early childhood services in Australia, places the current education situation in the historical context, and shows how historical influences still have an important impact on the present situation. The second section contains a state-by-state description of the early childhood services presently available for Aborigines. For each state, the report fully describes the administrative structures, enrollments, operating services, aims and philosophies, funding, nature of services, Aboriginal participation and staffing, issues, and future research directions of early childhood education, and summarizes the information in a table. The second section also describes training programs for Aborigines in early childhood education. The final section contains a summary of the main findings and issues identified in section II, discusses relevant literature and research, and proposes areas for future research. (SB)

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Early Childhood Services for Aboriginal Children

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Department of Education

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

K.R. McCONNOCHIE and A. RUSSELL

(with assistance from G.R. Teasdale and H. Northey)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This is a report arising from a research project commissioned in July, 1981 by the Commonwealth Department of Education into "Aboriginal Early Childhood Education". For the purposes of the project, early childhood education was taken to cover children aged 0 to 5 years and to include child care and education outside the government/ non-government school systems.

The project has a history dating back at least to 1977 with a committment made then by the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) to initiate or support research into Aboriginal education at all levels from pre-school to tertiary. As a first step, the Commonwealth Government via the Cabinet made funds available in 1978 for the N.A.E.C. to research all aspects of the training and employment of Aborigines as teachers. That research was completed in 1980. The N.A.E.C. then selected early childhood education as the next area of research to be undertaken. Proposals for a research project into Aboriginal early childhood education were discussed at a two day workshop of the National Conference of Aboriginal Early Childhood Education organised by the Commonwealth Department of Education. The workshop included representatives from the N.A.E.C., Commonwealth Department of Education, major State and Territory bodies involved in early childhood education, and the Australian Early Childhood Association. The basic format for the research was developed at that workshop and was subsequently presented to the authors in the form of "the study brief". The study was carried out from July 1981 with information and data collection completed in December 1981. No developments and changes from the beginning of 1982 are dealt with.

The Study Brief

The study brief identified three main areas to be covered in the report: (a) Historical Perspectives. This was intended to involve an examination of the history of early childhood education and Aboriginal early childhood services in Australia. The main purpose of the historical review was to place the current situation within a context. It also served to show the way in which historical influences still have an important impact on the present situation. The historical review is contained in Part 1 of the report.

The second area identified by the study brief was (b) The Current Situation in 1981. A description of present services was seen as the main purpose of the project. According to the study brief it was to involve a "State by State description of early childhood services for Aborigines within the context generally of early childhood services within each State". Areas to be covered included descriptions of administrative structures operating services, aims and philosophies of these bodies, funding, nature of services, Aboriginal participation, Aboriginal staffing, issues and possible future directions for research. The description of the present situation is largely contained in Part 2 of the report. It includes a description of training programs for Aborigines in early childhood services.

The third area contained in the Study Brief was (c) Literature Search, involving a review of the current literature and research partly in order to "develop a statement on areas which might suitably be researched in Aboriginal early childhood education". It became apparent after the review of the literature that there has been no significant addition to the literature already extensively reviewed by Watts (1). It seemed that the purpose of directing future research could be best served by providing a commentary on, or evaluation of existing research. This involved an overview of such things as the purpose of research, its potential for answering questions, inadequacies of present approaches to research, and the questions that should be examined by research.

The discussion of the literature and research is contained in Part 3. Part 3 begins with a summary of the main findings and issues identified in the description of the present situation. The discussion of the literature and existing research then follows. The report concludes with an outline of proposed areas for future research. The research proposals were formulated partly on the basis of the description of the present situation and partly on the basis of the discussion of the literature. Lists of abbreviations used as well as Individuals and agencies from whom information was obtained for the report are included at the end.

The project was carried out in consultation with a Steering Committee set up by the Commonwealth Department of Education. The Steering Committee contained Mr John Budby from the N.A.E.C. and Miss Joan Fry, Ms. Angela Mays, Miss Pam Sharpe and Mr. Bruce Morey from the Commonwealth Department of Education.

Comments on the Report

The decade of the 1970s has seen the emergence of early childhood education as a significant component of the school experience of many Aboriginal children throughout Australia. The present report has been written at a time of fairly rapid change and development for Aboriginal early childhood services. Now seems a good time to take stock, to ask what lessons have been learned and to apply these lessons to the future. The present report attempts to provide a foundation for this assessment process.

Two limiting factors should be kept in mind when reading the report. The first concerns the time constraints that operated throughout the entire project. The study brief required that information be collected quickly and the report completed in a relatively short time. The second constraint concerns the restricted data available on existing services and Aboriginal use of them. The nature of the data used has been explained at the beginning of Part 2. These two constraints have made it more difficult to complete the project than might have been the case under other conditions.

REFERENCES

1. Watts, B.H. Aboriginal Futures: Review of Research and Developments and Related Policies in the Education of Aborigines. Canberra, 1981.

PART 1

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The deliberate and organised provision of early childhood services for Aboriginal children in Australia does not have a long history. While the Northern Territory led the field by identifying a need for pre-school experiences in the 1950s, the major developments did not occur until the mid-1960s, when interest in the use of pre-schools for Aboriginal children increased spectacularly, and the range of programs being offered also increased, rather less spectacularly.

However, these developments did not occur spontaneously. Three separate sets of influences combined to bring about this interest in pre-school activities:

(1) policy changes and subsequent problems in the provision of primary education for Aboriginal children throughout Australia generated a demand for alternative strategies in Aboriginal education, a demand which pre-school education appeared well suited to meet,

(2) The emergence of well-funded and well-publicised compensatory education programs overseas, (particularly "Head-Start" and similar programs in North America) apparently provided a new and more hopeful interpretation of educational failure, and of appropriate remediation which could be directly applied in the Australian context, and

(3) the early childhood education movement already operating in Australia provided an existing framework for the development of these programs.

While these three sets of influences combined in bringing about substantial increases in the level of activity in early childhood programs for Aboriginal children, they were not completely congruent with one another. The three movements brought with them differing philosophies, goals, methodologies, terminology and criteria for success; differences which produced contradictions and tension within the Aboriginal early childhood programs which have continued to the present.

These areas of uncertainty and confusion, which are described in greater detail later in this report, have been influenced by many factors since the mid-1960s. However, an identification of the historical roots of these areas provides an important starting point for tracing subsequent developments.

Some of the central issues which can be traced back to these earlier historical factors include:

(a) Confusion about the purposes of early childhood programs for Aboriginal children.

Proponents of these programs have never fully agreed on the purposes of the programs. The rationales for the development of various programs have included cognitive rehabilitation, the development of school readiness, Froebelian concepts of "developing the whole child", general health and welfare, parental training and teacher education. The various programs implemented have reflected these varying objectives.

(b) Confusion about categories of programs.

The development of programs has rested heavily on experience with non-Aboriginal groups. The categories which have been used to describe (and fund) programs may have been appropriate for the groups for which they were originally intended, but are not necessarily appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal communities. This reliance on existing categories has limited the development of programs based directly on Aboriginal community needs.

(c) External control.

All of the dominant influences in the historical development of early childhood programs have been controlled by non-Aboriginal groups, with their administrative structures located outside Aboriginal communities. This has militated against Aboriginal communities having any significant influence within these agencies, to the extent that most Aboriginal-initiated programs have been forced to seek funds from outside the normal pre-school funding channels.

(d) Theoretical constructs.

All of these influences have drawn on theoretical frame-works and methodologies which have their roots in research and practice within western cultures. Only recently have the assumptions which this reliance has built into education programs begun to be recognised.

(e) Administration.

The range of administering and funding bodies involved in the development of the programs has been very large. This has led to fragmentation, and in some instances duplication of effort.

(f) Academic frameworks.

The range of academic disciplines drawn on in the development of the programs has been limited. The dominant academic influence has come from Psychology, with Sociology and Anthropology being minimally involved.

(g) Ideology.

Assimilationist ideologies have played a significant, if at times disguised role in the development of the programs.

This section begins by describing early historical influences, highlighting the ways in which they affected subsequent developments in pre-school education. The emergence of pre-school facilities in the 1960s and early 1970s is then described, followed by an introduction to more recent developments.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

INFLUENCES 1 : THE FAILURE OF ASSIMILATION

The emergence of pre-school education for Aboriginal children in the 1960s was inextricably linked with developments in the provision of primary schooling for these children. In tracing the history of white attempts to educate Aborigines it is impossible to avoid noting the close relationship between government policies towards Aboriginal people and educational policies and practices. Education has been regularly cited as 'the solution' to 'the Aboriginal problem', a practice based on the prevalent belief in Australian society that education can serve as an agent of social and political change. It is their recognition of this belief, that education and schooling can play an important role in modifying the values and behaviours of Aboriginal people, that has led Australian governments to adopt education as a central instrument in the furtherance of their various policies towards Aborigines.

It is possible to identify three broad periods in the development of governmental policies towards Aborigines. The first of these, from settlement through to the 1860s, was characterised by government intentions of "civilising and Christianising" Aborigines. As Rowley describes it, "The attitudes of the first Australian governments were in a long tradition which illustrates both basic ethnocentricity and the best of intentions ... In all, the tradition could be interpreted as an injunction to Christianise the heathen". (1) These intentions were widespread through the various colonies and although government support was generally limited, comments by historians that Aboriginal education was neglected until the 20th century are certainly untrue.

By the 1860s these early attempts were seen to have failed, and governments moved to largely negative policies of protection and separation. This period was characterised by beliefs that Aborigines were a dying race, and the well-known "smooth pillow" theories were rife.

By the 1870s this groundswell away from the benevolent policies of improvement and advancement, and towards policies of segregation and protection had begun to influence government attitudes towards education. The initial optimism and concern for Aborigines had given way to cynicism and despair. Aboriginal affairs became embroiled in economic and political expediency, with the policies of protection and segregation offering a welcome release to politicians and settlers alike.

The shift in government policies which brought about the establishment of segregated Aboriginal communities was reflected in the haste with which State education bodies lost interest in Aboriginal education. From the 1870s through until the 1940s Aboriginal education in Australia was quite inadequate. The disenchantment of governments with Aboriginal education may be related to a number of factors. Unable to develop strategies which would allow graziers and Aborigines to come to peaceful terms with one another, and embarrassed, and possibly distressed, at the bloodshed and brutality of the confrontation (and undoubtedly concerned over the interference with economic growth), politicians eagerly accepted the Social Darwinism of the late nineteenth century to vindicate their policies of segregation and protection.

These policies held some important implications for education. The first derived from the expectation that Aborigines would die out - that they were a dying race. Few Europeans could see very much point in educating a dying population for if, indeed:

> "They (Aborigines) have no hope, without the habits of forethought and providence they have no future, their doom is sealed" (2)

then why bother educating children for a non-existent future?

The second derived from the separation of Aborigines from white society and particularly from the white education system. Aboriginal children living on settlements were regularly denied access to the white school system, and often were not permitted to attend state schools. Most education provided came through the very sparse efforts of missionaries scattered throughout Australia, or through the very half-hearted attempts of untrained and often poorly educated whites appointed to Aboriginal reserves for various reasons.

Finally, the Social Darwinist notions adopted by policy-making bodies had a direct impact on education as Chase and Sturmer noted:

> "If the Australian was incapable of being civilised, at least in the short term, he was also incapable of being educated." (3)

That is, if Aboriginal intellect was constructed of instincts, with no facilities for higher mental processes, then there was clearly little point in trying to educate Aboriginal children.

The inadequacies of educational provisions during the period from the 1860s through to the 1940s are clearly indicated by descriptions of the amount of schooling experienced by Aborigines over this period (4)

For a variety of reasons, the late 1930s saw a further change in government policies with an emphasis on assimilation, and the use of concepts of wardship and tutelage as guidelines for policy and practice. These concepts are well described by Tatz:

> Racial minority status rarely has a foreseeable end. Guardianship in this sense is gradualism - a philosophy of tuition before rights. The children have to be tutored to education, to hygiene, health, employment, a cash economy, social grace, political participation and 'civilisation' before they are 'ready' for independence or citizenship. (5)

Rowley, in describing the same phenomena, indicates the importance of education in this process of civilising the Aborigines:

> Since Australian governments adopted the 'assimilation' policy emphasis has remained on promoting changes among the Aborigines. Though increasingly aware that prejudice against the Aborigines is basic in this syndrome, governments still devote administrative efforts to making Aborigines 'acceptable',.... (6)

With this policy shift came a predictable and abrupt shift in educational policies. Once again, Aborigines were to be civilised and Christianised, and again schools were to do the civilising and Christianising. However, in 1940 the education systems were quite unsuited to such a task. Only a small proportion of Aboriginal children through the State schools were receiving any education and this was a very inferior one, usually in separate schools, often with untrained or poorly qualified teachers. Neville, writing in 1947 summarises the proportion of Aboriginal children actually attending school:

> Of 21,000 odd children, only about one quarter are receiving any education at all, and these mostly at institutions ... throughout Australia there are probably less than 1,500 attending State schools outside settlements. (7)

Beckenham, writing in 1948, (8) agrees that the proportion of Aboriginal children receiving any eduation at all was very low. Pointing out that the proportions of Aboriginal children attending school varied substantially from State to State, Beckenham suggested that attendance in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania was probably quite good, but in the other States, with their extensive pastoral areas, the situation was far worse.

The move to enrol Aboriginal children in public schools met with bitter resistance from the local populace in many country areas. Duncan (9) provides a number of examples of this local pressure to exclude Aborigines from schools; pressure which delayed the closing of many Aboriginal schools. While some of these schools were closed in the early 1950s, it was not until the 1960s that the number of Aboriginal schools began to significantly diminish, and it was not until 1968, nearly 30 years after the formulation of the policy, that almost all Aboriginal pupils were in State schools.

By the mid-1960s, however, the immediate educational goals of the assimilationist program had been substantially met. Most Aboriginal children in Australia were being educated, at least at primary level, in State schools staffed by qualified teachers, with adequate educational facilities.

Despite these changes, problems had begun emerging in the mid-1950s and were becoming pressing by the mid-1960s. While the structure for assimilation had been achieved, it was clear that this was not accompanied by any substantial improvement in the educational attainments of Aboriginal children. It was becoming increasingly apparent that Aboriginal children were not succeeding in school; achievement levels were low, absenteeism was high, and Aboriginal children were dropping out of school early, with inadequate educational qualifications.

A number of articles and conferences in the early 1960s began expressing these problems and seeking more efficient techniques for educating Aboriginal children in school. Ruth Fink, in a paper presented to a summer school at Sydney University in 1962, expressed these problems:

> Why are these (Aboriginal) children gaining so little from their schooling and what can be done to prevent this educational wastage? The experience of the past 13 years has at least shown that their problems cannot be solved simply by the allotment of greater sums of money to education. The mere provision of better school buildings, departmentally trained teachers and incentives in the form of bursaries does not deal with the very complex problems of educating Aboriginal children. (10)

Over the period from the 1950s to the 1970s the extent of the problems experienced by Aboriginal children in education has been well documented (11). This research will not be described in detail here. However, two projects indicate the nature of the conclusions which have been drawn from the research.

In 1966 the Australian Census compiled information on both Aborigines and education, in such a way as to make it possible for Broom and Lancaster-Jones to "assess the status of the Aboriginal population more fully and accurately than ever before". (12) In 1973 they described the education status of persons classified as having 50 percent or more Aboriginal ancestry in the 1966 census. The tables which they provide allow detailed comparison between this group and the general Australian norms. In describing this comparison they comment:

> At every age Aborigines lag behind their white peers. They enter school later, progress slower, quit sooner and terminate at a lower level. (13)

They also comment on the effect such educational retardation is likely to have on Aborigines:

> The evidence shows that the present Aboriginal population as a whole is inadequately educated to cope with an agricultural economy of the late nineteenth century, much less an industrial economy of the late twentieth century. (14)

Broom and Lancaster-Jones' findings may be summarised under three headings:

1. Aboriginal Contact with Education

The census indicated that many Aboriginal children were not attending school in 1966. The percentage of non-attenders ranged from 18 percent in the Northern Territory to 6 percent in New South Wales and averaged 11 percent for the whole of Australia. As well as being less likely to attend school, Aboriginal children are likely to begin school later than their white peers and leave earlier.

2. Aboriginal Achievement

Aborigines achieve poorly in school. They are significantly over-represented in slow learner classes, and in grades lower than their age norms. They fail to gain higher educational qualifications: less than 1 percent achieved Leaving Certificate and only 5 percent had gained Intermediate or better, compared with 50 percent of their white peers.

3. Future Effects

The effects of educational retardation tend to be transgenerational. That is, the educational failure of the present generation of Aboriginal children is likely to be reflected in the school performance of future generations.

The second survey to be described here used a very large sample of children. Keeves, Mathews and Bourke (1978) report on their survey of more than 12,000 children attending 600 primary and secondary schools across all states and the Northern Territory. (15) In their discussion of the performance of Aboriginal children they comment:

> Differences in performances between Aboriginal students and the overall Australian samples were large enough to make it clear that a serious problem existed. The evidence suggests that many Aboriginal students would be handicapped in their progress through the school system and that many would be severely disadvantaged in their adult life ... on the average, their performance was 15 - 20 percent below that of Australian students overall. (16)

The available evidence has been drawn from Queensland, the Northern Territory, New South Wales, South Australia and in one instance from all the States and Territories. It is drawn from remote Aboriginal settlements, from rural communities and from large cities. It includes Aboriginal primary and secondary school pupils as well as Aboriginal adults. It examines the placement of Aborigines in school grades, the ages they enter and leave school, the attendance patterns, and the extent to which children gain educational qualifications. It overwhelmingly supports the claim that schools have failed Aborigines very badly. Coombs sums it up well when he comments that the Australian education system has left Aborigines:

> Utterly unequipped to deal with the paper materials needed for an industrial and democratic society; it has frozen them into the sector providing the limited kinds of unskilled labour capable of being performed by the illiterate and the near illiterate; as workers, as industrial bargainers, as claimants for consumers, as industrial bargainers, as claimants for social welfare benefits, as citizens seeking the protection of law or the enjoyment of civil liberties or redress through political action, it has left them hamstrung. (17)

During the 1950s and 1960s then, it became increasingly apparent to teachers, administrators, researchers and politicians, that Aboriginal children were not developing the skills or attitudes which the prevailing policies demanded. However, solutions were not immediately apparent within the primary schools. Programs based on various remedial techniques had not been successful, and alternative strategies which could be implemented within the primary schools were simply not available.

Rather than looking to develop such strategies, which would have demanded some radical rethinking of the nature and goals of education, educational strategists turned their attention to early childhood, arguing that the problems lay in the inadequate pre-school experiences of the children and that strategies for overcoming these problems could be provided by suitable pre-school programs.

During the 1960s and early 1970s increasing stress was placed on the idea that pre-school would overcome the problem of school failure. Examples of such proposals abound in the literature.

> In our view, the merits of attendance of Aboriginal children at pre-schools are already so well-established, that even though the most appropriate programs have not yet been evolved, arrangements should be set in action immediately to establish pre-school centres on settlements and missions. (18)

> This cumulative deficit hypothesis suggests that, if we are really concerned with the educational and social welfare of Aborigines, we should plan special programs for these children as early in their lives as possible. (19)

> Within the Australian context it would seem that the earliest possible point of intervention is at the pre-school age, ... (20)

McKeich in 1969, also arguing from the "cumulative deficit" hypothesis writes of the part-Aborigines of Western Australia:

> Although a 'complete' culture, in the sense that it meets part-Aboriginal needs within their value system, it deviates sufficiently from the majority culture to be regarded as restricting or limiting. (21)

> There is desperate need for compensatory education at the kindergarten level. (22)

D.W. McElwain in 1969 argued strongly for the provision of pre-school experiences directed towards developing linguistic and numeracy skills in order to overcome a lack of experience in these areas. (23)

In 1971, B.G. Dexter, the then Director of the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs, wrote that in the light of poor educational performance in primary and secondary schools:

> Confronted with this problem, the Council and Office of Aboriginal Affairs are generally of the opinion that one of the most hopeful prospects for Aboriginal education lies in the provision of suitable pre-schooling. We are fully convinced that suitable pre-schooling is of crucial importance if Aboriginal children are to realise their full potential, and we accord pre-schooling one of our highest over-all priorities. (24)

I.S. Mitchell, the then Director of Aboriginal Welfare for New South Wales, wrote in 1972 that to promote educational achievement:

> ...... it is necessary to overcompensate through the provision of funds and services, ...
>
> In pre-school terms this means the provision of enrichment programs, both formal and informal, for every Aboriginal child from birth to six years of age and then a continuing interest through the other stages of schooling. (25)

In summary, then, the period from 1950 through to the mid-1960s was one in which a great deal of activity was devoted to the development of primary schooling for Aboriginal children but with no equivalent activity at the pre-school level. As difficulties at the primary level became pressing, increasing emphasis was placed on the development of pre-schooling as an alleviating strategy.

This influence generated a number of expectations about the nature of pre-schooling for Aboriginal children: expectations which have influenced subsequent developments.

(1) The arguments were based on the premise that the achievement levels of Aboriginal children in primary schools could be significantly improved by early intervention programs.

(2) The expectations were that the pre-school programs would be specifically directed towards preparation for primary schools.

(3) Underlying these expectations was the belief that success in an un-modified primary school system was a critical component in Aboriginal advancement within Australia. Such a belief is ultimately based on an assimilationist ideology.

(4) These beliefs were not based on any detailed research into the causal factors involved in Aboriginal failure rates, nor were they based on an adequate analysis of the relationship between education and social mobility.

(5) Aboriginal communities were not adequately consulted in the development of the programs, nor did they have any significant influence over their construction.

(6) The subsequent developments in pre-school education were based on experiences in two related areas:

    (a) the existing kindergarten movements operating within Australia, and

    (b) the compensatory education programs being developed overseas (particularly in North America).

Before examining in more detail the developments in pre-schooling from the mid-1960s these two sources of influence will be considered in some detail.

INFLUENCES 2 : THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT

By the 1960s, when those involved in Aboriginal education began looking to use pre-schools as a solution to the problems of Aboriginal education, the Kindergarten movement in Australia was well established with a set of characteristics which provided one possible solution to the problems of the primary schools.

While the major developments in pre-schooling occurred in the period beginning with the Second World War, these developments were based on pre-existing structures. Two major themes, both consistent with earlier developments overseas, underlay the pre-1939 developments:

(1) the charitable and philanthropic zeal of energetic, active women who drew extensively on the work of the educationalist Froebel and whose ideas for social reform centred on providing kindergartens which were located in the poorer inner city slums and: " ..... were intended to redeem the children of working class parents." (26). The work of the McMillans in England, who influenced developments in pre-school education in Britain and subsequently in Australia provide an example of this theme.(27)

(2) the dominance of teachers from predominantly middle class families which could afford both to pay the fees for the 2-3 year training course and to help support them during their years of teaching. Karmel (1971), Pendred (1964) and Fry (1973) all comment on the fact that salaries were very low. (28) In the 1930s : 100 pounds p.a., less than a nurse's salary and far less than the basic male wage.

The philosophical base of the early kindergarten movement in Australia, as elsewhere, was strongly tied to the notion of redemption of the children of the poor, of socialising them to the prevailing mores of the middle classes, including values of self-discipline, industry, cleanliness and godliness. Through home visits attempts were also made to convert their parents to these values. The removal of inequalities through improvements in wages and work conditions, better housing and access to better health facilities for the whole family were not tasks undertaken by this group of reformers. Spearritt (29) argues that this may have been due to the fact that the Kindergarten movement was dominated by wealthy, educated women who wielded little political power.

The conflict between educational and philanthropic aims has been an enduring thread. For example, Lillian de Lissa, then Director of the Franklin Street Kindergarten in Adelaide, in her paper of 1906, acknowledges the philanthropic function of the Kindergarten but argues that education is the more important of its aims:

> There would not be the need of so many charities were education what it should be. Of education, Kindergarten is the first step, hence its importance. The foundation of a building is always the essential part, for no matter how elaborate the superstructure, if on a poor foundation, it is insecure. (30)

Administration and the Growth of Centres

Prior to the 1940s the pattern of administration was that of voluntary lay committees of non-residents interested in social reform who formed Kindergarten Unions and established centres in the crowded inner cities of all the capital cities. The establishment of these voluntary agencies occurred throughout the states mainly between 1896 and 1914. (31) Initially, the growth of pre-school centres in Australia was slow. Exact figures are difficult to ascertain as criteria for inclusion/exclusion vary widely. Very approximately, figures for Australia as a whole are as follows:

Date	No. of Centres	Source of Statistics (32)
1910	32	Spearritt, 1979, p.17
1927	71	Spearritt, 1979, p.17
1939	80-90	Fry, 1974, p.18, Table 3. 2
1951	171	Spearritt, 1979, p.24
1962	900-1,000	Pendred, 1964, p.400 & Walker, 1964, p.453
1973	1470	Fry, 1974, p.18, Table 3. 2
1977	3682	Fry, 1981, p. 146, Table 4. 2

Government support for the development of kindergartens has been present since the movement began:

> Government support, in the form of subsidies, was given to voluntary agencies in most States from the early stages but growth in the number of centres established remained small, as did the number of teachers trained. This was because money provided to maintain centres remained inadequate and funds for new buildings, including teachers colleges, were usually raised by public appeal or made available by private benefactors. The amount of money allocated by governments varied from State to State, as did the basis of payment. At the beginning of the Second World War the number of centres which has been established was small ..... (33)

Despite governmental intentions to co-ordinate pre-school education nationally, it was not until 1950 that day care organisations were admitted to its membership on an equal basis with the Kindergarten Unions. Spearritt argues that this both reinforced the already long term split between day care and kindergartens and that the: ",.. history of division did much to hamper the development of a vigorous child care lobby." (34)

Pendred (1964) outlines the aims of the national organisation. (35) These included setting of standards, both in relation to the operation of pre-school centres, and to teacher training, to promote post-Diploma training both within Australia and overseas, to organise conferences, publish literature both for parents and for professionals (e.g. the Australian Pre-School Quarterly which was begun in 1960), to advise on and stimulate research, and to maintain contact with overseas developments through its affiliation with O.M.E.P.

In Victoria, in 1937, the Director of Maternal and Infant Welfare presented a report to the National Health and Medical Research Council proposing closer liaison between baby health centres and kindergartens and that this co-ordination should be administered by the State Department of Health. In 1945 this was put into effect, and that body remained the administering body until the late 1970s when it was taken over by the Victorian Health Commission. The 1937 report also recommended the establishment of research and demonstration centres in each capital city. The Lady Gowrie Child Centres were established for this purpose in 1939, funded through the Federal Department of Health.

During the 1940s expansion of services into the A.C.T. and the N.T. occurred. In 1943 the Canberra Pre-School Society was funded and administered by the government, initially through the Education Branch of the Department of the Interior (36) and today administered through the A.C.T. Schools Authority and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education. (37) Developments in the N.T. are described in detail below.

Other significant developments during this period included the inception of the Kindergarten of the Air in Perth in 1942. This service was originally started to provide some replacement for normal kindergarten services which were closed in Western Australia due to war time conditions. In 1943 it began being broadcast in all States and continues nationally today. In 1957 a television program, Kindergarten Playtime, was introduced.

The Second World War and early post-war years were associated with a period of rapid growth in the number of pre-school and child-minding centres. As Spearritt notes:

> The first, a short-term development, was the need for creches for children of mothers engaged in war work, the large numbers of children involved were far greater than the capacities of existing facilities, which in the case of most kindergartens did not cater for working mothers.

> In March 1943, the Federal Labor Minister for Health announced that creches for children of mothers engaged in war work would be established in all States and that the existing pre-school organisations would be accepted and subsidised by the Government. Hours were to be extended from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. to 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. and children were to be taken from age two onwards, with preference given to the children of munitions workers ... The Commonwealth subsidy enabled the number of free kindergartens in Australia to increase from 76 in 1939 to 87 in 1944, including a number of wartime day nurseries in factory areas. (38)

A second factor was a growing demand on the part of middle class families for kindergartens in their own areas, for their own children. This trend may have been partly due to lack of domestic servants who usually undertook some child-minding but it was almost certainly also partly associated with increased belief in the importance of the early years as a time of rapid cognitive growth.(39) These families formed resident committees to establish their kindergartens and thus broke the long tradition of non-resident committees establishing kindergartens in the poorest areas. (40)

With middle class Australians demanding kindergartens in their local areas the old pattern of voluntary non-resident committees providing a philanthropic service for the poor changed. As kindergartens became established in the wealthier areas, the Kindergarten Unions themselves changed. For example, in New South Wales the K.U. encouraged the new parent/resident committees and reorganised itself in a number of ways including the development of its committee structure and the introduction in 1953 of parent contributions to all kindergartens, not just those affiliated with the K.U., over and above the amount already charged to pay for the costs of meals. No child was excluded through inability to pay. The pattern of Kindergarten Union work also changed from deciding where a kindergarten should be located, setting up and maintaining it to: "... that of providing information, advice and supervision. It retain(ed) the responsibility for training kindergarten teachers." (41)

Special provisions for migrant children began in 1951 when pre-school centres began to operate in 22 immigration centres. (42) Today migrant children generally attend 'normal' pre-schools in which: " ... the situation is likely to be one of an Anglo-Australian pre-school teacher seeking assistance from parents in the various ethnic communities." (43)

A survey carried out in South Australia in 1951: "... found that migrant parents wanted children to use their own languages and generally lacked confidence in the ability of the Australian kindergartens to cater for their children's needs." (44)

During the 1960s and 1970s the pattern of dependence on parental and voluntary effort continued with an enormous growth in the number of pre-school services since 1966. Spearritt (1979) identifies important factors here which include not only an increased awareness of the educational value of pre-school but also the fact that the percentage of married women employed outside the home has increased dramatically (in 1966, 29 percent, in 1976, 41 percent) (45) resulting in increased demands for child care services. In 1966 the proportion of 3-5 year olds attending pre-school was 8 percent and in 1977 the proportion of 4-5 year olds varied from 90 percent or more in South Australia, the A.C.T. and Northern Territory to roughly 40 percent in New South Wales. (46)

Teacher Training

By 1916, Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges administered by the Kindergarten Unions had been set up in New South Wales (1900), South Australia (1907), Queensland (1911), Western Australia (1912) and Melbourne (1916). (47) In NSW the Nursery School Teachers College was established in 1932 by the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association.

Theory and practice have always been closely interwoven into the courses with students undertaking considerable periods of practical work in kindergartens and more recently in day-care centres as well.

As noted before, almost all students paid fees to undertake two and later three years of training and it was not until 1966 that financial support through Commonwealth Advanced Education Scholarships was given throughout Australia. As a result, until 1966, virtually only those from the middle and upper socioeconomic groups were able to train as teachers. Training, until the 1970s, has only been open to women. With the post-1972 boom in Tertiary education, training institutions have increasingly become an established component of the Tertiary education system, but with significant differences being maintained between most pre-school and day-care training.

Broadly, the content of courses offered changed over the years as lecturers trained overseas provided increasing information about developments occurring elsewhere. For example, prior to the 1920s, courses centered heavily on Froebelian philosophy and practices with some attention given to child psychology. (48) After the 1930s influences from research and studies such as those of Gesell, Piaget, Freud and later Bowlby (in the 1950s) emphasised the importance of child development and psychology as core areas of study. Art, craft, music, literature, basic nature and social studies, first aid and history of education, curriculum studies have also formed part of a pre-school teacher's training since the early 1900s. (49) Today courses also emphasise the importance of societal changes and the relationship of the pre-school services to community needs.

Services Provided

Kindergartens in Australia, from their earliest years have tried to improve access to health and welfare services, either through visiting health professionals or through referring parents to relevant outside agencies. Promoting good nutrition has always been stressed as an important aspect of Kindergarten work and at times, for example during the depression of the 1930s, many Kindergartens provided a hot dinner for the children at minimal cost to the parents. Many Kindergartens in the lower socioeconomic areas still provide such services today.

A high degree of parent involvement and co-operation has also been considered vital. As noted earlier, originally during the early 'philanthropic' era, this involvement was seen as a means of educating poorer parents to better socialise their children into the norms of the middle class. Until the advent in the 1940s of resident parent committees which elected their own office-bearers, the Kindergarten Director was always the President of the Mothers' Club (50) and through these meetings as well as through individual discussions with parents could discuss the nature of kindergarten activities and advise parents on child-rearing methods.

Close liaison between pre-school and home remains an important aspect of kindergarten work today. Voluntary 'mother's help' during sessions, family working bees to develop and maintain playgrounds, buildings and equipment are an established part of the running of most kindergartens today, as are educational talks, films and pamphlets. However, as Fry (51) points out, there has yet to be an effective program developed if participation is to be a means of assisting a child's transition from home to school.

Developments in Educational Practices

This section draws very heavily on the work of Walker (1964) and Jones (1975). In contrast to primary and secondary schools, pre-schools have never had a set curriculum. (52) However, possibly because of the commonality of pedagogical influence and the small number of centres involved in the early days, in general the nature of their educational programs appears to have been very similar.

The development of Australian pre-school educational philosophies and practices owes much to the work of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) whose philosophy is still evident in certain kindergarten practices today. Until the 1920s and after, programs were heavily influenced by his methods (which were often rather rigidly interpreted and implemented) more than by his educational approach which was basically experimental. (53)

Other important influences on the development of educational practices included John Dewey, the Montessori Nursery School Movement of the 1920s, the influence of which began to be felt in Australia in the 1930s and continues today, the British Nursery School Movement, and more recently in the 1960s and the 1970s the compensatory education movement initiated by Project Head Start in 1965 and other associated American experimental projects, some of which have been used in Australia for special need groups.

From the 1930s on, the influence of the Nursery School Movement became increasingly apparent in Australian practices. Influential research and theories included Arnold Gesell's studies of stages of growth and development, Piaget's work on cognitive development and Freud's theories of unconscious motivation, all of which re-emphasised the vital importance of the early years of child development and of individual differences. As Walker notes: "The principles of child development, emphasised by the Nursery School Movement, have remained the core of kindergarten programs." (54)

Recommended modifications to existing practices included greater attention to observing and recording children's behaviour and to health and physical development, the introduction of smaller groups and less group work, less teacher direction, increased provision for children to interact freely, engage in free play and for self-expression. There was now also a greater stress on basing work around children's day to day experiences and increased use of excursions.

Changes to kindergarten materials included the introduction of larger sized manipulative equipment, simpler and easily available to the children. The larger "Patty Hill Blocks" replaced Froebel's gifts and boxes of different sizes, woodwork equipment, large sheets of paper, large brushes and easels to work on all came to be part of standard kindergarten equipment. Outdoor equipment (e.g. climbing ladders, balance boards etc.) also came to be used more and more to promote large motor co-ordination, muscle development, confidence and alternative forms of stimuli to a child's imagination. As Walker points out: "The experimentation during this period had, in fact, resulted in kindergartens expressing, more completely than ever, Froebel's concept of self-development through play." (55)

During the 1950s Bowlby's much publicised work on the nature and effects of early deprivation, and his strong emphasis on the relationship between later mental health and the satisfaction of the child's need for a warm, positive, continuous relationship with his mother or mother figure, particularly until a child had formed a stable attachment (believed to occur by two and a half years of age), influenced kindergarten practices. Those under three years of age were not encouraged to attend pre-school and greater care was given to enabling the separation process between to occur more slowly, if necessary through encouraging mothers to stay with their child if he/she showed signs of distress.

By the early 1970s, the period of intensive research into early childhood intervention reached its height but findings were inconsistent (56) and except for the development of a small number of special projects it had little real impact on the educational practices of Australian pre-schools. These tended to retain a so-called "traditional" approach emphasising the social, cognitive, physical and emotional development of the child in an environment maximising opportunities for free choice. The issue of exactly how much and what kinds of learning occur in such a situation remain unresolved. (57) Parent co-operation and education remains an important aspect of mainstream pre-school work.

Today, problems and conflicts associated with educational practices continue to abound. Ashby discusses some of the dilemmas facing pre-school education including conflicts over aims and methods and a lack of clear theoretical basis. Ashby argues that:

> Pre-school educators, by and large, have failed to articulate the assumptions underpinning their program. Thus they experience difficulty in handling educational theories that reject or drastically modify what they perceive as the traditional view of pre-school education. They have not had available convincing or substantial theories to counter criticism, but have tended to rely on intuitively devised slogans. For example, reference may be made to the 'all-round development of the child', 'dealing with the whole child', 'achieving balance between the emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs of the child' and 'not moving in advance of the child's readiness'. Such statements have an evocative ring, but it is by no means clear what they refer to, and how, in practical terms, they might be put into effect. The terms have been given meanings which are only clear to the initiated. People outside the tradition find them irritating, confusing and of doubtful validity. (58)

The kindergarten system, as a well-developed and extensive system, has provided both a model for, and in many instances the facilities for pre-school education for Aboriginal children. However, it was a system with a history, and a "modus-operandi" which have significantly influenced its response to the demands of Aboriginal pre-schooling.

(1) The philanthropic strand, running through the kindergarten movement suggests that it should be appropriate for economically disadvantaged children. However, there are limitations in both the view of social disadvantage held by the early proponents of kindergartens, and the applicability of this view to Aboriginal groups. The assumption that the children (and the parents) of

"the poorer classes" can be rescued from their plight through kindergartens can be interpreted from a variety of theoretical positions. At best, such an assumption seriously underestimates the strength and defensibility of working class culture; at worst, it can be interpreted as an attempt to produce a docile, malleable and well-mannered group of domestic servants. While this is not the place to examine such theoretical constructs, such "conversion" models were considered appropriate for Aboriginal children, and clearly fitted well with the current assimilationist ideologies. Such views are of course increasingly being criticised both by Aboriginal groups, and by those working within the pre-school movement.

(2) The kindergarten movement has contributed significantly to the "professionalisation" of childhood in western cultures. Western society has increasingly stressed the need for professional intervention in the process of socialisation of children, with a consequent erosion of the authority, and perceived competence of parents. Within the Aboriginal pre-schooling process, these professionals have been drawn from non-Aboriginal cultural and economic backgrounds.

(3) The selection and training of kindergarten staff has excluded both Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people, until very recently. This has seriously curtailed the possibilities of individual staff members recognising and responding appropriately to the problems of cultural difference.

(4) The "child centred" approaches adopted and the romantic and culture-specific views of childhood incorporated in such approaches do not lend themselves readily to the tasks identified for Aboriginal schooling. The programs were not directed towards the amelioration of specific deficits in Aboriginal children, nor were they directed specifically towards preparation for school. While the programs developed may have been thoroughly enjoyable for the children, there is little evidence that they would significantly improve the chances of Aboriginal children succeeding in primary schools. Of course, many kindergarten teachers may well accept this, arguing that preparation for school is not one of their major goals.

(5) The administrative structures which have evolved in the kindergarten movement, especially since World War II, have militated against any significant involvement of Aboriginal parents. These structures have assumed, to a greater or lesser extent,

(a) parental willingness to interact in committee structures,

(b) parental willingness to involve themselves in assisting in kindergartens,

(c) non-working mothers,

(d) adequate transport,

(e) money.

These characteristics have been woven into the pattern of preschooling for Aboriginal children. However, a somewhat different pattern has also been threaded in, drawing heavily on the compensatory education programs developed overseas in the 1960s. This pattern is described in the following section.

INFLUENCES 3 : COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

The emergence of compensatory education as a strategy for achieving educational and social equality for disadvantaged children was one of the spectacular developments in education in North America during the 1960s. The speed with which this concept gained acceptance in political and educational circles, and the rapid development of educational programs which received very large amounts of funding, indicate the fitness of the idea to the times. The major agents of the emergence of compensatory education were liberal academics and educators of the sixties. Disillusioned by the failure of the American education system to bring about any kind of educational or social equality, they saw in the compensatory programs a technique which could substantially alter the status of poor Americans, black or white, within the space of one generation.

The programs were attractive to governments seeking a solution to the problems which had created the black violence of the early and mid sixties, to many blacks who continued to believe that education offered an avenue for mobility in American society, and to the many teachers who were frustrated in their efforts to teach black children in schools. This attraction was strengthened as the effects of black migration to the urban areas of North America produced communities and schools with large concentrations of blacks and consequent acute educational and social problems.

If the time was right politically, it was also right academically. A set of theoretical constructs and educational movements fell into place, creating an intuitively convincing model for the education of black children; a model which challenged no existing suppositions and which was supported by the psychological theory from which it derived.

The compensatory education programs were based on the connected concepts of cultural deprivation and compensatory education. These concepts were seen as being well-grounded in psychological theory, as relating closely to existing educational practices, and as providing a solution to the problems of educating deprived and deficient children in North America. The cultural deprivation component of the argument, developed in the writings of McVicker-Hunt, Gordon, Deutsch, Jensen, and others, (59) postulated that the black children grew up in an environment which was lacking in some vital elements. These writers suggested that cultural inadequacies, inadequate perceptual and cognitive stimulation, poor language stimulation, insufficient motivation, debased self-concept, and physiological inadequacies such as malnutrition and disease could provide explanations for the poor school performance of the black children.

Black children, then, were seen as arriving at school already suffering from environmental deficits which had impaired their cognitive, linguistic and personal competency. This impairment, reflected in depressed performance on various tests, seriously interferred with their ability to cope with school learning, and produced a cumulative deficit, reflected in steadily deteriorating performance in school, until they dropped out completely; functionally illiterate and ill-equipped to cope with the stresses and demands of modern society.

The intent of the compensatory education component of the argument was relatively simple. Deficits in the child's environment could be overcome by the provision of appropriate experience at appropriate times. The expression of this intention into actual education programs has been far from simple however. Passow suggests that there are 21 different general types of compensatory programs, ranging from "infant education and intervention in early family life aimed at changing child-rearing practices" to "post-secondary programs aimed at motivating and preparing disadvantaged youth and adults for continuing education, and designed to change the conditions for the selection and education of minority group children". (60)

The identification of environmental deficits inevitably led to the creation of strategies to overcome these deficits; to intervene in the development of the child in such a way as either to replace the deficit traits with superior ones, or to counter the effects of factors beyond immediate control with experiences which could produce competing behaviours which would eventually replace existing structures. The range of strategies which have been applied is, as indicated above, very large. The specific strategies chosen will depend on what kinds of deficits are to be overcome, how much money is available, and whether the school, the home or aspects of the wider society are to be the focus for the program. However, although the total range of techniques is large, the bulk of intervention programs have used a small range of strategies. The most common have been:

- early childhood and pre-school programs, designed to provide a set of perceptual cognitive and linguistic experiences which will develop desirable cognitive and linguistic skills in disadvantaged children;

- intervention in home environments, to provide mothers with new child-rearing techniques which will develop appropriate attitudinal, cognitive, or linguistic behaviours;

- extensive remedial programs introduced into schools to ameliorate the performance deficits already existing in the children;
- tutorial schemes using professional, para-professional or lay persons to provide individual coaching at various levels throughout the school system, and
- additional resources and funds provided to schools with high proportions of disadvantaged pupils.

As we describe further below, these programs were used extensively in Aboriginal early childhood. The development of these programs provided a further set of influences.

(1) the programs concentrated on the remediation of various postulated deficits in Aboriginal children or their families,

(2) the programs were directly based on psychological theory (predominantly behaviourist),

(3) the programs were directed towards improving the achievement levels of Aboriginal children in primary schools,

(4) again there was minimal consultation with, or involvement of, Aboriginal communities.

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CHAPTER 3

ABORIGINES AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

The three groups of influences described in the previous chapter led to the rapid development of pre-school education for Aboriginal children in the period from the mid-1960s.

The number of Aboriginal children attending pre-schools in the various States prior to these developments are difficult to assess, but were certainly low. Save the Children Fund pre-schools had been established in some States; four were operating in Victoria in 1966, and ten were operating in New South Wales by 1969. However, Jones, in 1968, estimated that only 20-25 Aboriginal children were attending pre-schools in Western Australia (1) while a total of 354 Aboriginal children were attending government pre-schools in the Northern Territory in 1966.

Tatz (2) suggests the following numbers were enrolled in pre-schools in the various States in 1966-67; however, these estimates are certainly wildly optimistic, especially in W.A., N.S.W. and Victoria.

State	Estimated Number of Aboriginal Pre-School Enrolments 1966-7
Northern Territory*	362
Victoria	60
South Australia	150
Western Australia	400
New South Wales	857
Queensland	240
Total:	2,164

* Figures are for full-blood Aborigines only

The relevance of the three sets of influences described in the previous chapter can be seen in a brief survey of some of the literature proposing the development of early childhood services for Aboriginal children.

The Failure of the Primary School Programs

A number of writers point to the importance of pre-school programs as a source of remediation for Aboriginal children; and as a solution to the problems of educational failure within the assimilationist framework. De Lacey, (1974) provides a typical comment:

> A serious attempt should be made to facilitate the acculturation of non middle-class children to middle-class western life ways in Australia, so far as is necessary to help them succeed in school and to be able to acquire a greater share of middle class control economy. (3)

The Director of Primary Education in Western Australia reasserted these objectives:

> Our objective is to provide Aboriginal pupils with the educational skills necessary to enable them to participate in what our civilisation has to offer. Although we should respect the Aborigines background and culture, our purpose is to produce good citizens. (4)

Developments in Aboriginal education over the period of 1966-1972 were generally within this mould with some exceptions described below. In this, the education program was in line with official policy. While there was some softening of the Commonwealth attitude towards assimilation, particularly after the creation of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs the shift from assimilation to integration did not indicate any substantial change in policy; Aborigines were still expected to modify their behaviour, values and skills and become acceptable to white society as a precursor to entering the general community. There was little choice in the end point of the policy, but some freedom to choose the rate of change.

The Adoption of Compensatory Education Programs

The compensatory/deficit programs developed in North America were transferred intact to Australia, providing a central theme in the development of many of the programs for Aboriginal children. This transfer involved firstly the development of a body of research literature on Aboriginal children which utilises the deficit models to identify inadequacies in Aboriginal children, and secondly, the emergence of a proliferation of compensatory education programs, designed to solve the problems of Aboriginal education.

A brief survey of psychological writing in this area indicates both the nature and source of the theoretical position being adopted. M. de Lemos, who conducted the pioneering work on applying Piagetian concepts to cognitive development in Aboriginal children wrote in 1973:

> The change in theoretical conceptions of the nature and determinants of intelligence led to the new concept of compensatory education and the particular emphasis on pre-school education as a means of overcoming the educational handicaps of disadvantaged groups, now attributed to the poor and intellectually unstimulating environment of these children ... the influence of these developments has naturally been felt in Australia. (5)

Dr B. Watts, author of the influential Watts-Gallacher report and Director of a number of Aboriginal education programs, offers a similar view:

> There is a growing body of research data on what have been called 'culturally deprived' children. The description of these children, as contrasted with middle-class children, fit very well the group with whom we are now concerned (Aboriginal children). The feature of greatest educational significance is not that these children are Aborigines, but that they have been reared under particular circumstances which are not conducive to success in school learning. Furthermore, it has been shown that the culturally deprived children suffer also linguistic and cognitive impoverishment. (6)

Nurcombe and Moffitt, describing the theoretical background to the compensatory education program of Bourke wrote:

> The project began as an intervention based on the deprivation model, thus: fringe-dwelling part-Aborigines do poorly at primary school mainly because of their poor verbal competence in standard English. The deficit is due theoretically to a lack of appropriate stimulation in the pre-school years and afterwards. (7)

The cultural deprivation model, then was transferred to Australia intact.

The Extension of Existing Pre-School Programs

The charitable basis of pre-school education in Australia had never completely disappeared and the new, exciting developments in Aboriginal education, coupled with the increased availability of funds, led to the renewal of attempts to direct the existing programs towards disadvantaged groups (particularly Aboriginal).

The subsequent developments in pre-school programs for Aboriginal children can be usefully described under three headings:

(1) The Experimental Programs

A number of well-funded and well-publicised research projects had major effects on the development of pre-school programs for Aboriginal children over this period. These programs have been dominated by the Van Leer programs, initiated in the late sixties. Table 1 (overleaf) from the book by Teasdale and Whitelaw indicates some aspects of these programs. (8)

PROJECT	ADMINISTRATIVE BASE	PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	DURATION	APPROXIMATE AGE LEVELS OF CHILDREN	BASIC APPROACH	MAJOR PRACTICAL OUTCOME
Bourke	Department of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales	(i) Private Enterprise (ii) Australian Government	1969 - continuing	4 to 5 years	Compensatory education. A structured pre-school program designed to enrich children's language, number and conceptual development.	Establishment of an on-going pre-school for Aboriginal and white children in Bourke.
New South Wales	Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney	(i) van Leer Foundation (ii) NSW and Australian Governments	1969 - 1974	0 to 5 years	Family education. Parents given support and training so that they could be fellow learners with each other and with their children.	Establishment of the NSW AFEC Federation as an all Aboriginal organisation concerned with developing Aboriginal identity via programs of family education.
Victoria	Faculty of Education, Monash University	(i) van Leer Foundation (ii) Victorian Government	1969 - 1972	2 to 5 years	No firm commitment to any one approach. Home based teaching sessions conducted by trained teachers became the predominant pattern.	A series of basic recommendations regarding the provision of early childhood services to the Aboriginal people of Victoria.
South Australia	School of Social Sciences, Flinders University	van Leer Foundation	1969 - 1971	3 to 5 years	Compensatory education, with an attempt to incorporate family education in a conventional pre-school setting.	Close liaison with the SA Department of Education in the establishment of both pre-schools as ongoing ventures.
Katherine	Committee representing various government departments	Australian Government	1970 - 1973	4 to 8+ years	A broad-based attack on the problem of school failure, with emphasis on communication skills, home-school liaison, health care, and community involvement.	Substantial improvement in the quality of schooling at all levels in the Katherine community.
Queensland	Queensland Department of Education	(i) van Leer Foundation (ii) Queensland Government	1969 - continuing	5 to 8 years	Language development via an elaborate and carefully sequenced program of instruction covering the first three years of formal schooling.	The production of a language program incorporating all other aspects of the school curriculum in an integrated approach.

TABLE 1: From Teasdale and Whitelaw. Basic features of the six projects.

One further program deserves inclusion here. From March 1972 to December 1973 Watts and Henry ran an action-research project designed to increase the teaching abilities of urban Aboriginal mothers and thereby:

> to help the mothers create in the home an environment favourable to their children's development, particularly in school-relevant characteristics ... (9)

Two intervention programs were run concurrently - the Home Teaching Program, and the Library Program. Additionally, three Aboriginal mothers who had participated in the Home Teaching Program joined the team as parent educators in the second year of the project.

A number of noteworthy points emerged from these experimental programs:

1. All were established in the late 1960s or early 1970s, all but one had concluded by 1974.

2. All but one were controlled by university based groups.

3. All were basically concerned with pre-school years.

4. With the notable exception of the A.F.E.C. program at Sydney, the dominant intent of the programs was to modify the cognitive/linguistic skills of Aboriginal children in order to bring them more closely into line with those of middle-class white children. In attempting this the programs depended heavily on evidence from psychometrics to identify those deficits.

5. The evaluation of these programs has been inadequate. Even within the framework of the deficit models the instruments used and the research design adopted have been quite inadequate.

6. Where more general evaluations have been attempted they have been largely limited to assessments of subsequent school performance; again using quite inadequate research technique and design.

7. No evidence has been provided from these projects to suggest that the programs developed have had any substantial, long term effects on either the cognitive/ linguistic competence, or the educational achievements of Aboriginal children.

These projects have been described in detail in Teasdale and Whitelaw and in Watts and Henry, and will not be described further here.

(2) The Elaboration of State-Based Programs

Programs described in this area include the downward extension of school systems, and the elaboration of existing pre-school programs. These were also basically intervention programs, based on the same models, instigated by State education authorities as either a downward extension of the regular school system or an extension of existing kindergarten programs. For example, in Victoria in 1971, twelve Aboriginal children were known to be attending kindergarten:

> In February 1972, the Ministry promoted pre-school awards in order to encourage attendance in pre-schools. Two qualified pre-school advisors were employed and began regular visits throughout the State to advise parents of the benefits of this scheme and to inform kindergartens. In October, 1973, 109 Aboriginal children were enrolled at kindergartens ... 20 Aboriginal assistants were employed at kindergartens on a Ministry subsidy ... a mobile kindergarten staffed by two experienced pre-school teachers and two Aboriginal assistants, commenced operation in East Gippsland in February 1974.(10)

A similar government funded pre-school program was developed in Western Australia over much the same period. Jones estimates that 20-25 Aboriginal children were attending pre-schools in Western Australia in 1968. As funds became available to establish a State-wide pre-school program for Aboriginal children numbers rose rapidly; in 1972 - 426; in 1973 - 658. This program was established as a three tiered scheme: local pre-schools on Aboriginal communities, transitional groups and already established pre-school centres, and an integrated Aboriginal European pre-school year before the children enter school. (11)

In other states, similar programs to extend regular kindergarten services to Aboriginal children have been developed. These programs differ from experimental programs in a number of ways: they are more concerned with generalised enrichment and the development of social skills rather than the highly structured language programs; they are less interested in rigorous assessment of the program within an experimental framework and they have generally utilised materials and techniques (albeit modified), drawn from the mainstream kindergarten movement.

These less specific and more modest goals have left the State-initiated programs less vulnerable to criticism. The bulk of these programs are continuing, although with no noticeable impact on the educational attainment of the Aboriginal children. The spin-off benefits may well be considerable: employment of Aboriginal teachers and assistants, improved diet, child-minding facilities for harassed Aboriginal mothers, and so on. However, there is no evidence available at the moment to indicate that after 10 years of fairly widespread pre-school programs, the achievement of Aboriginal children in school has shown any marked improvement.

These programs have developed into the extensive pre-school services described in detail in the section concerned with individual States.

(3) Locally Initiated Programs

These programs are the most difficult to describe or evaluate. They are small projects, initiated throughout Australia, ranging from well-funded and well-documented projects (such as the project at Katherine) through documented local projects operating in church halls and pre-schools (such as the A.E.F. project at Alberton) through to quite undocumented mothers' groups meeting in each others homes.

The goals of these projects have differed enormously and range from whole-hearted compensatory education through to providing a meeting-place for mothers. However, given the paucity of information, it is not possible at the moment to do more than point to the wide-spread existence of these programs, to suggest that their impact on the school achievement of the children is likely to be minimal, and to speculate that their social effects are likely to be varied, but not substantial.

Recent Developments

With the election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972, Federal policies towards Aborigines underwent another radical change. The Labor government's policy of "self-determination", while often vaguely formulated and inadequately implemented, heralded the end of the assimilation era.

Accompanying this self-determination policy were clear statements supporting local autonomy and decision-making, substantial increases in access by local communities to federal funding, improved Aboriginal participation in advisory and decision-making structures, and greater awareness within the wider community of the presence, problems and demands of Aboriginal people.

These new policy directives brought about a number of changes including a greatly increased level of political awareness and sophistication amongst Aboriginal communities, the emergence of a wide range of social welfare programs directed towards and controlled by Aboriginal people, an atmosphere of steadily rising expectations within Aboriginal communities, and a strengthening sense of Aboriginal identity.

However, the educational implications of the self-determination policy were not spelled out. This policy vacuum led to a great deal of confusion and very little coherent development in the provision of western schooling to Aboriginal pupils. While the concepts of compensatory and remedial education, deriving from the assimilationist policies, were clearly no longer appropriate, alternative educational programs were not constructed by the Australian education system.

This confusion has provided increasingly powerful and confident Aboriginal communities with an opportunity for developing a wide variety of experimental educational programs; an opportunity which has been grasped by many Aboriginal communities, particularly within the current policies of "self-management".

Three developments have been of particular interest to Early Childhood programs:

1. the increased involvement and dominance of the Federal Government and the tension between Pre-school and Day Care which has arisen within this context;

2. the emergence of Aboriginal-initiated programs;

3. increased Aboriginal involvement in education generally, through the presence of greater numbers of qualified Aboriginal personnel in positions of authority, and the employment of Aboriginal aides and general staff.

After 1972 pre-school services for Aborigines grew dramatically. Federal funds had become available to the States specifically to develop pre-school services. As an example of the rapid expansion of services, the number of Aboriginal children enrolled in pre-schools in Western Australia, as indicated by Teasdale and Whitelaw (12) was 89 in 1971, 426 in 1972, and 658 by 1973. Other States reflected this trend; Teasdale and Whitelaw note:

During the following years there was continued expansion and consolidation, and by 1980 pre-school provisions were available for most Aboriginal children in Australia. Although these vary from State to State, they share a number of common features:

(a) parental and community involvement is strongly encouraged. Devolution of responsibility to parents, however, has not occurred, except in isolated instances;

(b) programming is fairly traditional and conservative, the primary aim being to prepare children for formal schooling; nevertheless, programs increasingly have reflected a sensitivity to Aboriginal culture, language and lifestyle;

(c) the employment of Aboriginal teacher aides is an established feature of most pre-schools. (13)

The present report is the first attempt to document this expansion, on a national basis, since the estimates by Tatz in 1968. The following table identifies the extent of this expansion:

Estimated Enrolments of Aboriginal Pre-School Children

	Tatz (14)	1981 Estimates (15)
Northern Territory	362	908
Victoria	60	112
South Australia	150	350
Western Australia	400	1,766
New South Wales	857	1,200
Queensland	240	1,356
Total:	2,164*	5,692

A number of points may be made about this expansion:

(1) The bulk of the expansion has occurred during the 1970s through the extension of existing services, either by the downward extension of state school systems, or the elaboration of existing kindergarten services.

(2) The various experimental programs have had a minimal impact on the increase in enrolments, but have had a very substantial impact on theory and practice in Aboriginal pre-schooling.

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* We suspect that this figure overestimates actual enrolments by at least 100%. The actual enrolments were probably less than 1,000.

(3) There has been a continuing influence of small locally initiated programs, working outside the traditional pre-school frameworks. These programs have not been well documented, but provide a potential reservoir of experience for alternative strategies in Aboriginal pre-schooling.

(4) There were significant differences between the various States in the rate of development of services, and the relative impact of the various influences described above. These are described in more detail in later chapters.

Conclusion

As a conclusion to this review of historical influences in the development of pre-school services for Aboriginal children we would like to return briefly to the issues identified at the beginning of this chapter; and elaborate on some of these issues in the light of the historical material which has been presented.

(1) The Aims of Aboriginal Pre-schooling

There is still substantial diversity of goals established for pre-school programs for Aboriginal children. Where programs are related to traditional kindergarten programs, goals tend to be oriented towards general "child centred" objectives, while programs established as downward extensions of primary schooling show a stronger emphasis on school-related skills. Increasingly, locally initiated independent programs are emphasising community involvement in the establishment of goals, and are constructing programs related to the expressed needs of Aboriginal communities. These differences have been maintained in the absence of any significant research into the effects of the various kinds of programs on the children or the communities, and in the absence of any significant Aboriginal input into program construction.

(2) Categories of Programs

The bulk of developments in early childhood programs for Aboriginal children has occurred within structures which were initially developed for other purposes. Categories such as "day care", "sessional pre-school", "family day care" and so on place specific constraints on the programs which limit the flexibility of those programs. Recent, innovatory community based programs are beginning to move beyond those limitations and construct programs which fit into none of the pre-existing categories, and which face consequent difficulties in funding, registration, staffing and so on.

(3) Aboriginal Authority

Aboriginal involvement in the development and implementation of early childhood programs has been limited. However, Aboriginal women are increasingly becoming involved in programs as para-professional staff, and very recently programs have been developed to enable Aboriginal students to obtain professional qualifications. However Aboriginal communities still exert little influence on the development and administration of early childhood programs.

(4) Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical base to Aboriginal early childhood programs is still confused. The responsibility for the development of actual programs is largely held by individual practitioners in the field, who draw on a variety of sources in developing programs. However, the programs tend to be based on constructs drawn from a variety of psychological theories, with little influence from sociological or anthropological theory.

(5) Policy and Practice

While there has been an increased awareness of the inappropriateness of assimilationist programs, the practical implications of the abandonment of such policies have not been systematically examined. In terms of daily activities in pre-schools there has been little evidence of substantive change in the bulk of pre-school programs over the last 10 years. However, there is increasing evidence that significant changes are now beginning to be introduced, particularly through the influence of various independent programs. These changes are considered in greater detail in later sections.

(6) Pre-Schools and Day-Care

The dominant influences in the development of early childhood services for Aboriginal children have been related to schooling, and to the psychological characteristics of Aboriginal children. The child care needs of Aboriginal parents or communities have been relatively ignored in these developments. This is reflected in the minimal development of Aboriginal involvement in day-care facilities.

The period from the early 1960s through to the present has seen enormous progress, with a very significant increase in the provision of pre-school services to Aboriginal children. These developments began as a visionary movement seeking to use pre-schooling as a strategy to achieve social and economic equality for Aboriginal people. This vision has not been lost. However, the processes of turning the vision into reality have proven far more difficult and complex than had been expected. The reconstruction of early childhood programs for Aboriginal children has just begun.

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PART 2

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Part Two is to describe existing early childhood services for Aboriginal children in Australia. This will include description of the main institutions (State and Commonwealth) involved in the funding and/or delivery of services as well as characteristics of the services per se. Part Two begins with an examination of the role of the Commonwealth Government via (a) the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, (b) the Office of Child Care, and (c) the Commonwealth Department of Education. Then follows a State-by-State description in which special attention is given to the main institutions within each State responsible for early childhood provisions for Aboriginal children. The contribution of the Save the Children Fund is then described, as a body providing services in most States. Next, the situation with respect to Aboriginal children using day care services is examined. The part ends with a description of education and training programs for Aborigines involved in early childhood services. A summary table of the main features of each State description can be found at the end of the State chapter. These are to be found as follows: summary table of Queensland on page 90 ; Victoria on page 100; Northern Territory on page 131 ; South Australia on page 160; Tasmania on page 164; Western Australia on page 176 and New South Wales on page 192.

Data Collection

At the time the study brief for the present project was formulated, it was believed that the results from a national survey of early childhood services (known as the National Data Base) carried-out in late 1980 would be available and would form the central core of the description of existing services. The National Data Base (N.D.B.) represented a comprehensive and standardised collection of information on services and numbers of children attending etc. It would have enabled a fairly complete and detailed description of services in which Aboriginal children were to be found. Difficulties and delays in the analysis of the N.D.B. material meant it did not become available for the present report.

In the absence of the N.D.B. results, the procedure adopted for the collection of information was as follows. Areas in which information was needed were identified (e.g. numbers of children attending, staffing, types of program etc.) A comprehensive list of possible State, Commonwealth, Religious and Private groups, organisations, institutions and individuals who may in any way be involved with early childhood services for Aborigines was compiled. Information in the identified areas was requested from each of the groups, organisations etc. via letter and/or personal visit and interview. An appraisal was then made of the information received to identify gaps or areas for additional data. Follow-up visits or contacts were then made to most of the groups or organisations to complete the data collection.

The data on which the present report is based cannot be described as coming from systematic or standardised collection procedures. The data used came from a variety of sources, e.g. relevant reports or statistics supplied by groups or institutions (e.g. their Annual Reports). Often those surveyed failed to have any formal or satisfactory information in important areas requested for the report (e.g. participation rates, types of programs). In these cases, such information that may be available, e.g. anecdotal reports, impressions conveyed in interviews with key personnel etc., were used. It must be emphasised that the present descriptions have been to a considerable degree shaped and determined by the availability of information in individual institutions, groups etc. This has meant that the report is very uneven in the sense that in some cases an issue or area may be given considerable attention and in another case virtually ignored. For example, in South Australia there were several detailed studies available on the use of early childhood services by urban Aborigines. This question is therefore given considerable attention in South Australia. Similarly, although the role of Aboriginal Assistants in pre-schools was an issue in all States, most of the discussion of this issue is to be found in the description of Victoria, simply because there was more literature available in Victoria.

Although uneven in the degree to which issues are discussed in each State, it is probably fair to say that in the end product the key issues have been identified and have received reasonable discussion at least one point in the description. As well as the unevenness of the description of the present situation, it must also be noted that the descriptions are often based more on anecdotal forms of information than on reliable statistics. This was inevitable given the unavailability of the N.D.B. The main body of data collection occurred over the period July - December, 1981. The report, therefore, mainly describes the situation as it existed in 1981. The available statistics used in the report usually came from 1980 or 1981. The most recent statistics were always preferred, but at times organisations did not have available their enrolment figures for 1981. In such cases 1980 statistics were used.

Areas/Issues Covered by the Report

The description of existing early childhood services for Aboriginal children has been written around seven central areas or issues. The first concerns the aims, philosophies and policies of institutions and organisations etc. involved in the funding or delivery of early childhood services for Aborigines. In the subsequent description this area is usually covered in the sub-section "OVERVIEW" and is mainly based on official statements as reflected in such things as Annual Reports.

The second area deals with funding. This concerns how much money was allocated to Aboriginal early childhood and the question of State and Commonwealth contributions. In the State-by-State description there is a separate discussion of "funding" for each institution involved in the provision of services. Policies about how funds are determined or allocated are also considered in the report.

The number and kinds of services for Aboriginal children is the third area. In the State-by-State description this area is covered under the sub-section "PROGRAMS/SERVICES". An attempt is made to describe how many Aboriginal children are involved in early childhood services and in what kind of services they are to be found. As part of the analysis of services an attempt was made to describe aspects of the "aims and orientation of the program, the curriculum etc.". This is the fourth area. Here an attempt was made to describe something of the flavour or content of programs in a more concrete fashion. This proved very difficult because of limited information. Nevertheless, a combination of policy statement and anecdotal reports often allowed some reasonable statements to be made about program content. The diversity of programs was at least one worthwhile finding from this exercise.

The fifth area concerned the way in which services are staffed. Special attention was given to the numbers of Aboriginal staff, their training and qualifications, and their role.

The participation rates for Aboriginal children in early childhood services was the sixth area. Participation rates were taken to mean (a) numbers of children enrolled in relation to available children in the area with a potential to be enrolled, and (b) the attendance rates of enrolled children. It was found that there is virtually no official information available on Aboriginal participation rates. Again, therefore, this sub-section in the report was based largely on anecdotal reports. Nevertheless, the picture that emerged was a reasonably consistent one throughout Australia.

The final area covered in the report concerns "Issues and areas for possible future development". This section is to be found at the end of the description of each State. The purpose was to describe issues identified in literature, or interviews with people, about the State. Thus it represents a description of views expressed by other people about services within the State in question, rather than issues imposed by us as authors after an analysis of services.

In view of the data collection procedures above, it must be apparent that the following description of existing services will have limitations, including omissions, errors and inadequacies arising from incomplete data. Insofar as the report is based on information supplied to us, we cannot guarantee that it will be complete; it is possible that individuals or groups who are presently making a significant contribution to Aboriginal early childhood services are not mentioned in the report. What we can say is that the present description probably represents an outline of the main institutions and groups involved in Aboriginal early childhood services at present. Although the description has many limitations, we also believe that when seen in total it represents a reasonable overview of the existing situations. We believe the strength of the description lies more in its identification of issues or areas of concern than in its presentation of detailed statistical summaries of services and Aboriginal involvement. Another strength of the description is that attention to issues and areas of concern also provides a good foundation for the identification of fields of potential future research.

CHAPTER 4

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

THE DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

The beginnings of the Commonwealth's contribution to Aboriginal affairs came with the establishment of the Department of Native Affairs in the Northern Territory immediately prior to the Second World War (1). Stevens (2) notes that the establishment of the Department of Native Affairs was a recommendation made by Thomson (3) in 1937 as a result of an investigation into Aboriginal policy in the Northern Territory. Thomson also recommended the "Commonwealth pressure ... the States to produce a uniform policy in relation to indigenes". (4)

Pressure increased on the Commonwealth to take responsibility for Australia's Aborigines and ultimately resulted in the 1967 referendum. The referendum "allowed the Australian Constitution to be amended giving the Commonwealth Government the power to pass laws for the benefit of Aboriginal people". (5) All States except Queensland eventually handed over the major responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs to the Commonwealth. In Queensland, the State retained its direct involvement and does so through the State Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement (DAIA). The initial response of the Commonwealth to the referendum was not, however, to take a major leadership role. Instead, it saw itself primarily in a role of funding and coordinating State initiatives and to do so it established an office of Aboriginal Affairs within the Prime Minister's Department (6). The major expansion of the Commonwealth's role in Aboriginal Affairs came with the establishment of the separate Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) by the Labor Government elected in December, 1972. With the passing of the Commonwealth Aboriginal Affairs (Arrangements with the States) Act 1973, arrangements were concluded with the States regarding the Commonwealth's financial responsibilities and the residual powers and resposibilities of the States with respect to Aboriginal Affairs.

Prior to the referendum, the Commonwealth had recognised the importance of pre-school education for Aboriginal children and had established a number of Aboriginal pre-schools in the Northern Territory, and a pre-school centre was available to the Aboriginal community at Jervis Bay, ACT.

Since the referendum, the Commonwealth Government's policy on Aboriginal Affairs has been evolving and changing. Chislett (7) has described these changes from 1968 to 1978 as being fourfold. "The policy was changed from that of assimilation to integration to self-determination to self-management". With respect to self management the D.A.A. (8) has said:

self management is a key concept in Aboriginal Affairs. It acknowledges that Aboriginals must be involved in the programs that concern them. They must determine their own priorities, develop initiatives and take responsibility for the decisions they make.

Officially, the D.A.A. "is responsible for the development, in consultation with Aboriginal people, of national policies directed to the advancement of the Aboriginal people, the administration of these policies, and the co-ordination of programs". (9) While the 1973 Act provided for increased Commonwealth responsibility for planning, co-ordinating and financing activities designed to promote the advancement of Aboriginal people, it would appear that, in the mind of the Commonwealth, the States were not to be absolved of any responsibilities they already exercised in respect of general services to Aboriginal people as to other citizens within those States.

The long term objective of the Department's financing arrangements is "to provide Aborigines with opportunities and options, for the individual and the community, in the fields of economic, social and cultural development which are equal to those available to other Australians". (10) To this end, the provision of certain benefits, not available to other citizens, is considered appropriate for Aboriginal people, in order that current disadvantage may be overcome and that they become able to utilise Government Services available to all citizens.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is a major source of funds for programs in many areas, including health, welfare, education, law and justice, employment, and training. Other Commonwealth Departments also have functional responsibility within these areas, and in addition State Governments administer programs which provide general community services in the same areas. Some States (eg. Queensland) directly fund special programs for Aborigines. Relationships between the various Commonwealth Departments, and between the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and State functional Departments (e.g. Education, Community Welfare, Health), as well as Aboriginal organisations, are therefore of paramount importance when it comes to establishing priorities, and developing, implementing and administering programs.

Four categories of Government financial responsibility for Aboriginal people are recognised, namely:

(a) State responsibility for Aborigines as citizens of the State, but with eligibility for special benefits on the principle of need;

(b) functional Commonwealth Departments (e.g. Education, Social Security) providing community services, again with the principle of need operating;

(c) supplementation grants to States from D.A.A., and

(d) direct Grants-in-Aid from D.A.A. to Aboriginal organisations and to other organisations working for and with Aboriginal people.

In the latter two categories, where there is a D.A.A. contribution, the original intention was that normal funding avenues would take responsibility in the long term. (e.g. an Education program would eventually be funded as an Education program rather than as an Aboriginal program). State grants are provided to increase the accessibility to Aboriginal people of general community services (in some cases by accelerating the provision of such services) and to provide selective services to meet the special needs of Aboriginal people. Since the general purpose of such State grants is to accustom Aboriginal people to use general community services, the intention of the Commonwealth Government is that D.A.A. funding will be progressively withdrawn, leaving the State to bear full responsibility. The ability of States to assume such financial responsibility is questionable, particularly in the current climate of budgetary restraint. Also, the States are critical of the policy of D.A.A. withdrawal of funding in this way. The intention of the D.A.A. seems to be to fund "special" programs and to provide "seed" money for needed or innovatory programs, and not to provide long term support for the broad base of Aboriginal services. The Commonwealth and States seem to have disparate perceptions of each other's roles, possibly because of ambiguities in the Commonwealth/State arrangements (see below).

The ability of Aboriginal organisations to obtain funding from Commonwealth or State functional authorities for projects initially supported by Grants-in-Aid is severely limited. As DAA undertakes to continue to fund a service "so long as the service it provides is required and is effective" (11), opportunities for new initiatives to be funded become extremely rare. This applies mainly because of the overall funding constraints on the D.A.A. and if they are supporting a service in the long term, then clearly there are fewer opportunities for new initiatives.

Interpretation of the Commonwealth/State arrangements is not straightforward as the extent of State and Commonwealth responsibility is unclear. The Commonwealth Aboriginal Affairs (Arrangement with the States) Act 1973 gives the Commonwealth "increased responsibilities" (i.e. not full responsibility) for the planning, co-ordintion and financing of activities designed to promote the economic, social and cultural advancement of the Aboriginal people. In commenting on the agreement with the States, however, Somers (12) points out that States retain their responsibility for programs for Aborigines as part of their provision of general services. Thus, about the arrangement with NSW, Somers (13) says:

> The arrangement does not absolve the NSW Government of responsibility for financing the maintenance of general services to Aboriginals at the same level as to other citizens, including particular measures in respect of

disadvantaged groups.

So, for instance, in education (other than higher education) which is a responsibility of the States, the D.A.A. is expected "to ensure that Aboriginals ... utilise available education opportunities at all levels". (14) At the pre-school level, a large number of Aboriginal Assistants are funded by D.A.A.. It is generally considered that such Assistants play an important role in encouraging Aboriginal families to use pre-school facilities. Were D.A.A. to discontinue covering salary costs, there would be little chance that pre-schools could continue to employ these Aboriginal people, particularly in the many cases where they are additional staff.

The decision-making process leading to D.A.A. funding approval is a long one. Local Aboriginal communities present their needs and priorities to D.A.A. Area officers who then make recommendations to the Regional Directors. Submissions from State Departments as well as the recommendations of Area Officers are examined in the light of the Region's priorities and general strategy together with a planning figure supplied by central office, and the rules for eligibility of funding set out in the Ministerial Directive. Regional Directors' proposals as well as those from various national Aboriginal organisations are then assessed by central office, this time using national criteria re priorities and strategies. The decision process with respect to education programs involves a significant input from the N.A.E.C. Then the D.A.A. bid is lodged with the Department of Finance. Following that Department's approval, the actual possible annual program is approved at Regional level for Regional programs, and by the Head of the Operations Division in Central Office for other programs, except those which require the Minister's approval before inclusion in the program (these usually have some sensitive political, policy or financial implications). (15)

This long consultation-coordination cycle, while ensuring that the needs of Aboriginal communities are ascertained, has several drawbacks. One is the actual time factor, for forward estimates, which themselves have to be formulated months before the Budget is brought-down in Parliament, are based upon submissions which could be the result of several months of work and meetings at Area and Community level. Associated with this time lag is the fact that changes in the composition of committees and management groups may alter the commitment of a group to a particular proposal. This situation may be taken care of to the extent that Regional Directors and some of their senior officers have certain delegated power over the payment and acquittal of funds.

The establishment in 1980 of the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) and the assumption by the Executive of the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC) of the advisory function formerly exercised by the Council for Aboriginal Development which was abolished as a result of the Review of Commonwealth Functions, were significant events in Aboriginal affairs.

Policy on Education

The Commonwealth Government believes that Aboriginal people should be assisted and enabled to have full access to the general education system within Australia (16). At the same time it "recognises the fundamental right of Aboriginals to retain their racial identity and associated lifestyle" while acknowledging and upholding diversity in "the extent to which Aboriginals wish to enter the mainstream of the wider society". (17) There are difficulties at the practical level, in providing both adequate and appropriate educational opportunities and facilities for Aboriginal people. Furthermore, an appreciation of the distinctive characteristics and cultural values of the Aboriginal people by the whole Australian community is an essential part of effective education of Aborigines. The Education Guidelines of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs therefore place priority on the involvement of Aboriginal people in "the planning, conduct and management of education and related research", as well as tertiary and further education training programs for adult Aborigines. (18) They add that there should be "development and adaptation of education programs to meet the needs identified by Aboriginal people". (19)

As stated earlier, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs does not have functional responsibility in education and training, nor does it directly deliver services in these areas. It does, however, provide funds both as State Grants to enable functional Departments to improve or accelerate the provision of general and special services for Aboriginal people, and also as Grants-in-Aid to non-government organisations to enable them to deliver services to Aboriginal people. (20)

In an overview of their funding (21) the D.A.A. reported that for 1980/81, the expenditure on Aboriginal pre-schooling was $2,340,000 with $1,289,700 being allocated to grants to the States and $1,050,300 in grants directly to organisations. Other sources (22) showed that in 1980/81 the D.A.A. allocated a total of $2,484,237 for early childhood: education ($2,117,054) and training ($367,183). The same source indicated that the funding allocation for 1981/82 was $2,732,211 with $2,456,727 for early childhood education and $277,486 for early childhood training. Watts (23) summarises D.A.A. funding on pre-school education over the period 1968-1978 and she indicates that $77,597 was spent in 1968-69, rising to $198,194 in 1970-71 with a large increase to $424,573 in 1971-72. From 1974-75 to 1977-78 the D.A.A. was shown as spending something around $2 million per year on pre-school education for Aborigines. The funding in 1980/81 supported:

(a) capital and operating costs of pre-schools dependent on Aboriginal enrolments;

(b) the employment of about 200 Aboriginal pre-school assistants;

(c) employment of supplementary staff (cooks, clerks, bus drivers etc.);

(d) in-service training and advisory services for pre-school staff, and

(e) transport costs in some areas.

A more detailed breakdown (24) of the D.A.A. funding showed the following. State Grants supported the specialist advisory/research/curriculum development unit within the Early childhood Branch of the Education Department of Western Australia ($695,500), the employment of one pre-school adviser and one teacher of English as a second language in the Coober Pedy and Pitjantjatjara areas of South Australia ($46,000), thirty-three Aboriginal pre-school Assistants in Victoria ($205,200), and also provided subsidies for twenty-two Queensland pre-schools which have a proportion of Aboriginal and Islander enrolment ($343,000).

In New South Wales, over $600,000 of the Grants-in-Aid went towards the operating costs of thirteen Save the Children's Fund pre-schools, and about $60,000 towards the operation of Murawina pre-school and nursery at Redfern. (This also receives support from the Office of Child Care, the Norman Catts Bequest and the State Department of Youth and Community Services). Another six pre-schools received salaries for Aboriginal Assistants.

The employment of some Assistants, as well as bus and general operating expenses of six Queensland pre-schools were met by DAA funds. One pre-school in the Northern Territory was supported, while an Adelaide pre-school/creche is currently subsidised. A school building and teacher accommodation for the Forrest River School, W.A., about one-third of whose enrolment are pre-schoolers, received an allocation of about $100,000. A pick-up service for pre-school children is operated with D.A.A. funding in Ceduna, S.A., where playground construction costs have also been met. By far the largest Grant-in-Aid for South Australia ($236,000) went to support the employment and training of Aboriginal Assistants in Kindergarten Union pre-schools. There is no Grant-in-Aid allocation for Tasmania, neither are there any special D.A.A. Grants-in-Aid for Training in the pre-school area. (25)

D.A.A. funding is purported to be allocated on a needs, not a per capita basis, which goes some way towards explaining anomalies that exist in State allocations. But prior funding patterns and continuing needs appear to take precedence over newer and emerging needs. Larger allocations to New South Wales and Tasmania to meet their growing needs would, for example, be possible only if State Governments accepted financial responsibility for 'on-going programs of proven worth' or if the allocations were reduced to those States which were sufficiently well organised to get projects funded in the early days, namely Western Australia and South Australia, given that the annual Budget allocation for Aboriginal Affairs has not increased substantially.

THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE

The Office of Child Care was established in June 1976. It had its origins in moves by the Federal Labor Government elected in December 1972. Prior to then, there was almost no Commonwealth Government involvement in services (Education and Care) for young children, with the States holding responsibility for such services. The situation in early childhood provisions throughout the 1960's has been well documented (26;27). The emphasis in State Government funding was almost exclusively on sessional pre-school and even then there was limited availability of services. Spearritt (28) described the situation in 1970 as follows:

> sessional pre-school care ... was only available for 52 per cent of the pre-school age population (three- to five-year olds) in the ACT, 29 per cent in Victoria, 17 per cent in South Australia, 13 per cent in Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, and only 3 per cent in New South Wales. For other children, parents made arrangements with relatives or neighbours, or resorted to private profit-making child-care centres where the weekly rates are often astronomical.

The first increase in Commonwealth Government involvement in provisions for early childhood services came with the introduction of the Child Care Act in 1972 by the Liberal Government. The Act received Royal Assent in November 1972 and provided for:

> capital and recurrent grants direct to non-profit organisations including local government bodies for the establishment and support of full day care child care centres for children below school entry age (29).

The relatively limited availability of early childhood services in 1972 together with the growth of working mothers with pre-school children were two of the important factors which led the newly elected Labor Government in 1972 to a belief that greater Federal involvement in early childhood services was needed. They began the process with the establishment of the Australian Pre-schools Committee, which led eventually to the establishment of the Office of Child Care in 1976. The period between the Australian Pre-schools Committee and the Office of Child Care was one of some uncertainty and changes of direction. It has been fully described elsewhere (30; 31; 32) and is well summarised by the statement:

> By mid 1974 the Government had commissioned and received three reports with different terms of reference and different recommendations on early childhood education and care. The Fry Report (33) recommended the availability of pre-school

> education for 70 per cent of four-year-olds, child care for 10 per cent of all pre-school children, steps to ensure sufficient numbers of professionally qualified staff and the Australian Pre-schools Commission to operate under the portfolio of the Minister for Education. The Social Welfare Commission Report (34), with broader terms of reference, recommended a wider range of services that would emphasise child care and would cater for 38 percent of children under school age; staff qualifications were assigned less weight, local governments were to be involved in administration and the Federal administrative body would be part of the Department of Social Security. The Priorities Review Staff (35) largely supported the Social Welfare Commission on clientele and staff qualifications, disagreed about local government involvement and opted for administration by a Federal Department without 'vested interests'. (36)

A large part of "the debate" during the period 1972-74 concerned the balance between pre-school education and child care services. As it emerged since then and up until 1981, it has become clear that neither "side" emerged successful, with the kind of Federal Government support it was seeking. Instead, children's services have become an element of social welfare funding from the Commonwealth Government. This seems to have occurred in the following way.

In 1974 responsibility for pre-school and child care schemes was given to Lionel Bowen, Special Minister of State in the Labor Government. In a major statement issued in September 1974 he announced the formation of an Interim Committee for a Children's Commission which was to stimulate the development of a wide range of children's services. The statement recognised that many families used informal and unsubsidised child minding services and that some assistance should become available to enable maximum benefit to flow from these arrangements. He also claimed that "one of the real strengths of the Government's program is that it will break down the false dichotomy between child care and pre-school", a situation which in practice "has created a harmful distinction between the mother at home and the mother at work". (37) The Government had intended that pre-schooling would compensate for disadvantages of income, social background and ethnic origin. Existing arrangements were seen as favouring those children whose mothers could "afford to stay at home". (38)

The Children's Commission never came into being, however. The next Government (Liberal-Country Party) appointed the Minister for Social Security, Senator Guilfoyle, to assist the Prime Minister in matters concerning pre-schools and child care. The new Government decided against having the previous Labor Government's Children's Commission Act (which had passed both Houses of Parliament in June 1975) proclaimed and instead, created an Office of Child Care within the Department of Social Security.

According to Senator Guilfoyle (39), the O.C.C. "was established to advise the Government on national policy for children and for related family services and to administer the Government's Children's Services Program...". She added, "The Government's main aim in the Children's Services Program is to provide child care services to children of families most in need". Need was then defined (40) as including children of families in soio-economic need; children with particular needs such as the handicapped, geographically isolated children, some Aboriginals and Immigrants, and children considered to be "at risk", or likely to be "admitted to residential care". The major portion of the Government's support for early childhood services at the beginning of their involvement (1974/75) involved capital and recurrent contributions for pre-schools. Initially the Commonwealth provided 100 percent of salary costs of agreed staff in pre-schools. This was changed to 75 percent of all staff salaries in January 1976. However, in January 1977, the Commonwealth changed to funding pre-school and associated services on the basis of Block Grants to States. Partly as a consequence of not increasing the overall allocation to the Children's Services Program and partly as a result of the Government giving greater weight to the child care area over pre-schools, (41) the Commonwealth's contribution to salary costs for pre-schools has declined from 100 percent in 1974/5 to a level at present below about 30 percent for most States. This can be seen as consistent with a policy that sessional pre-school is an educational service and that the States rather than the Commonwealth have responsibility for Education.

The Block Grant funding of pre-schools means that it is up to the States to disperse recurrent assistance to pre-schools. Nevertheless, the Commonwealth has outlined certain broad guidelines or conditions under which it is expected pre-school services will operate. These conditions largely relate to the "integration" of services. Senator Guilfoyle (42) explained that:

> pre-schools being funded with Commonwealth money are expected:
>
> * to diversify the use made of their buildings so that a wider range of children's services can be based on pre-schools;
>
> * to link in with other related community services such as health and welfare services;
>
> * to give maximum support to the provision of services for children in socio-economic need and with other particular needs.

At present there are three elements to the Children's Services Program. Firstly, as already outlined, there is a Block Grant to States for pre-school education. For 1981/82 the budget allocation for pre-school education was $33.09 million (43). Secondly, funds are allocated for a "range of other services including day care, out of school hours care and family support programs". (44) These services are funded for capital and recurrent expenditure and grants are made both direct and through State Governments. For 1981/82 the budget allocation in this second category was $47.01 million. (45) Lastly, the Government provided money for a "Family Support Services Scheme ... intended to promote the development of a range of services designed to support families in their responsibilities in the rearing and development of children". (46) For 1982-84 the Government allocated $10 million for this scheme.

In terms of the O.C.C.'s involvement in ealy childhood services for Aboriginal children, there are two key factors. The first is that O.C.C. attitudes and policies operate within the context of overall Government policy on Aborigines. This is quite clear from the address given by Marie Coleman (Director of the OCC) to the First Aboriginal Child Survival Seminar (47) where she discusses such things as the value and preservation of Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal self management and Aboriginal involvement in programs of direct consequence to them. The second factor to be noted is that funding of Aboriginal early childhood services is an integral part of the Children's Services Program. Thus, Aboriginal programs are funded according to the guidelines specified in the Program rather than being a separate or unique category for funding. However,

> the office of Child Care has established its own Aboriginal Child Care Unit to liaise with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and other Commonwealth Departments such as Health and Education to develop policy and to oversight the development and implementation of Aboriginal Children's services approved by the Minister of Social Security. (48)

The Office of Child Care (49) "points out that in the Children's Services Program priority of access is given to children with certain needs" and Aboriginal children and their families constitute one of these need categories. Thus, in terms of its Block Grants to the States for pre-schools, the Commonwealth would expect that the special needs category for Aboriginal children be recognised by the States in their allocation of funds.

Funds allocated in the Children's Services Program under the headings of "Other Services" and "the Family Support Services Schemes" are more directly under the control of the O.C.C. per se in terms of the allocation of funds, with funds being provided for individual projects. In terms of funding for projects in these categories, the O.C.C. (50) says:

> The significant aspect of the Children's Services Program for Aboriginals is the Program's flexibility. The program is able to support a wide range of services, and to meet up to 100 percent of the costs of projects. With funding from the Program, eligible organisations are able to design their own services, within broad guidelines, according to their own

cultural perceptions. Community involvement and self-help in the planning and administration of services is encouraged.

The Children's Services Program approved funding of $925,000 for 1981/82 for organisations providing services for Aboriginal children and families. (51) The Office of Child Care listed the following types of projects as receiving support:

(a) multi-purpose child care centres;

(b) Aboriginal Children's Services;

(c) Emergency accommodation for Aboriginal Children;

(d) financial conselling services;

(e) support services to Aboriginal children in hospital and their families;

(f) training programs for Aboriginal pre-school assistants;

(g) training programs for staff of Aboriginal Child Care Agencies;

(h) Purchase of mini-buses to transport Aboriginal children to pre-school centres and other care programs and Aboriginal youth to cultural and recreational programs;

(i) Family support services;

(j) Vacation care and out of school hours projects;

(k) Conferences.

It was also noted that Aboriginal Child Care Agencies in Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth had been established with grants from the Children's Services Program (Family Support Services Scheme) (52) and "that advisory services to pre-schools with a high number of Aboriginal and Islander children were supported". (53) In addition, the O.C.C. has funded a "Homeland Movement Research Project" which aims to examine "the effectiveness of Commonwealth Government Programs bearing on the well-being of Children in tradition-oriented Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and South Australia". (54) It is difficult to separate out O.C.C. expenditure on older children or for families. That the claim by the O.C.C. of spending $925,000 for 1981/82 for organisations providing services for Aboriginal children and families may not be a very accurate estimate of the expenditure of the O.C.C. on Aboriginal early childhood is suggested by figures from the Aboriginal Education Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Education (55; 56). The latter showed O.C.C. expenditure on Aboriginal early childhood education in 1979/80 as $268,185 and in 1980/81 as $172,894.

A case study of O.C.C. funding: Queensland

It is not possible to describe in detail the specific projects supported by the O.C.C. in each State. As the types of projects funded in each State are very similar, Queensland has been selected to provide a case study of the sorts of programs funded by the O.C.C. over and above the Block Grant for pre-school education (which in Queensland is administered by the State Department of Education). The case study helps to show the way in which the O.C.C. supports Aboriginal early childhood provisions.

Consistent with O.C.C. policy, the Queensland Office is flexible in its application of funding criteria for Aboriginal and Islander Groups. Thus, the Queensland office has funded many "playgroups" run by Aborigines and Islanders whereas such groups probably would not be funded in white communities. This is consistent with the policy outlined by Senator Chaney about special attention being given to groups with greatest need. At present the O.C.C. is funding three Aboriginal and Islander "playgroups" mainly for staff salaries and operational costs.

The history of this funding needs to be explained. In 1979, the Minister for Social Security, Senator the Hon. Margaret Guilfoyle, funded a number of playgroup/day care projects which were recommended by the D.A.A.. An element in three of the recommendations was difficulties experienced by Aboriginal and Islander parents in using existing pre-school and kindergarten facilities. Some of the reasons seemed to be lack of indigenous staff, lack of places, lack of transport and parental discomfort with European oriented facilities. As a consequence, in many country towns very few Aboriginal and Islander children enrol in existing facilities even when there are substantial numbers of 3-5 year old children. The D.A.A. especially recognised this situation in three country towns where it was clear that when the children began primary school they were shy and unprepared and hence progressed slowly, often dropping out. It was in this type of situation that the playgroups were funded.

The playgroups are run by Aboriginal and Islander staff who, at the moment, have no formal qualifications in child development or teaching. Further it is clear that the playgroups do not conform to what some would see as the usual model, e.g. with children mainly at the age of toddler or a little older and with high parent participation and sessions only once or twice per week, run either by parents themselves or with untrained staff. In comments on one playgroup an O.C.C. report said "It is difficult to place a descriptive 'label' on this group. Although it was funded as a playgroup, parents do not attend at present. It appears to be providing a type of day care/kindergarten service." Certainly there seems to be a wide age range of children attending the playgroups, with children of 2, 3 and 4 years old enrolled, parents seeming to contribute relatively little in the conduct of the sessions, and sessions run up to five days per week. In commenting on one of the playgroups an O.C.C. report said the playgroup

> developed out of a concern of Aboriginal parents for their children's development. For years there had been a glaring absence of Aboriginal children from the Kindergarten and Pre-school in the area. Because the Playgroup has attempted to compensate for this lack of early childhood education it has 'modelled' itself largely on Kindergarten program lines.

In comments on another playgroup, an O.C.C. report said the aim of the playgroup was "to compensate for the lack of early childhood educational experiences for Aboriginal and Islander children aged 3-5 years ...".

An examination of the objectives of the playgroups and outlines of their programs confirms the impression that they are modelled on Kindergarten lines. An element in the funding of each of the playgroups has been transport costs to enable children to travel to playgroup. It has been argued that without transport children will not or could not attend. It is clear that officers of the O.C.C. and many others in Queensland believe that pressure is placed on the O.C.C. to fund early childhood programs (in this case "playgroups") for Aborigines because for various reasons (see subsequent comments on participation rates in the description of the States) they do not use local non-Aboriginal pre-schools or kindergartens.

Other projects the O.C.C. in Queensland have funded include a multi-functional Neighbourhood Centre which has among its activities the running of a playgroup. In a different type of project altogether, the O.C.C. also supported a "Homemaker Service" in a large country town, in which a person visits homes to provide services on such things as: family budgeting, nutritious cooking and foods, health care, general housekeeping etc. Clearly, Aboriginal or Islander children would benefit from this project. Also of a somewhat indirect nature in its impact on pre-school children is the Brisbane Child Care Agency which receives a grant from the O.C.C.. The Child Care Agency's main aim is to "Prevent the disintegration of Aboriginal and Islander families through the provision of a Family Support Program". Included in the Agency are "Field Officers" whose duties include "Organisation of a mothers' 'drop-in' Centre and informal Child Care Centre" and "Liaison with kindergartens and assisting parents to enrol children in Kindergartens". Clearly, the main focus of the Agency is the welfare of Aboriginal and Islander Families in general. At times, pre-school children are the beneficiaries. Lastly, the O.C.C. provides a grant to the Creche and Kindergarten Association for salaries and operation costs for a specialist advisory service to Aboriginal and Islander run Kindergartens and Kindergartens with a high incidence of Aboriginal and Islander children.

Comments on the Children's Services Program

One of the features of the Children's Services Program seems to be that a division is maintained between pre-school education and child-care services. Ashby (57) makes this point when he says:

> In spite of some progress towards integrated services, pre-school and child-care are still funded separately under distinct conditions, and in a number of states, administered separately.

Ashby (58) also believes "long-term policy and planning objectives for early childhood services are still unresolved" and "no clear statement has emerged to guide administrators and others connected with planning". His points could be applied to early childhood services for Aborigines as well as in general.

Others have also been critical of Commonwealth policy and funding in early childhood. The Keeves enquiry (59) in S.A. for example pointed critically to the fact that the Commonwealth tended to initiate projects and expect the State to take-over the project in the long term but without having had any involvement in the decision to provide the initial support. The Australian Pre-school Association (60), now the Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA), comment on "the fragmentation and lack of coordination in the early childhood field that has developed during the last decade" and believe that uncertainties about State and Commonwealth responsibilities in the early childhood area has led to a certain amount of "buck-passing".

McNulty covers many of the usual criticisms of the Commonwealth Government's contribution to early childhood services. She sees the overall picture at present as

> one of almost total fragmentation, each service being funded and administered on a different basis. Only the most intrepid would attempt to provide a range of services. All services are funded at inadequate levels with the inevitable result that each fights to achieve a larger slice of a constantly diminishing cake. (61)

She summarises the period 1972-1982 as being one which

> has seen the rise and fall of the Children's Services Program. The excitement and enthusiasm of the early years has given way to the despair of the eighties as the community, promised so much, watches a Government apparently determined to divest itself of as much of the program as unobtrusively as possible. (62)

The only hope for Aborigines in this situation of despair for the general community is that, as McNulty notes, the Government is placing more emphasis on the Children's Services Program as an element of welfare funding and that priority is given to those in need.

Many believe that there exists no comprehensive and co-ordinated national children's or family support policy, a point that applies equally to the community in general and the Aboriginal community in particular. As a consequence, services have tended to be fragmented and responsibility divided. Part of this arises from the confusion in the administration of early childhood services and the difficulties of determining and coordinating State and Commonwealth efforts. Clearly, much of the criticism cannot be levelled at the O.C.C. per se, but relates more to overall Government priorities and policies to do with early childhood and family support.

COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The role of the Commonwealth Department of Education in Aboriginal Education has been explained in its submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. (63) The Commonwealth Department of Education acts as a consultant to the DAA on Australia-wide policies and administers "agreed programs" in Aboriginal education. It lists its role at present in regard to Aboriginal education as covering four main areas:

(a) It advises the D.A.A. on matters relating to education; for example, funding of Aboriginal education programs by the D.A.A. is determined in consultation with the N.A.E.C. and the Commonwealth Department of Education;

(b) It administers three special schemes of student assistance, which include the "Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme", a scheme used by many students to further their training and qualifications in the early childhood field;

(c) It provides a co-ordinating role within the Education portfolio, and

(d) It consults with N.A.E.C., which

> is responsible for providing the Minister and Department of Education with informed Aboriginal views on the educational needs of Aboriginal people and appropriate methods of meeting these needs... The committee is attached to and serviced by the Department. (64)

Since the 1967 Referendum the Commonwealth Department of Education has had a role in the development of policy in Aboriginal Education. Prior to 1967 the relevant Commonwealth Department responsible for Aboriginal affairs in the N.T. and A.C.T. was the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science. A major element of the policy development role since 1967 has been its "effort to encourage the development of early childhood services and the participation of Aboriginal children in those services ...". (65) The Department also contributed substantially to the development of bilingual education programs in the Northern Territory. As part of its role, the Commonwealth Department of education also sponsors an annual national meeting of Aboriginal pre-school advisers to discuss policy and practice.

The major elements of the Commonwealth policy on Aboriginal early childhood services includes:

(a) an emphasis on Aboriginal involvement and responsibility for their own programs (including support for programs to train Aborigines for involvement and self-management);

(b) the encouragement of Aboriginal staff in early childhood programs (including support for the training of such staff);

(c) acceptance of the value of Aboriginal culture and a recognition of the importance of developing Aboriginal identity and fostering Aboriginal culture (including support for the development of Aboriginal Studies programs), and

(d) recognition of the importance of making non-Aboriginal staff in early childhood programs recognise the necessity to involve Aboriginal people in decision-making.

The guidelines are developed in consultation with both D.A.A. and the N.A.E.C. Ultimately, the reponsibility for the formulation of policy on all aspects of Aboriginal affairs falls to the D.A.A. and the Commonwealth Department of Education must operate within the context of D.A.A. policies. It is apparent, therefore, that C.D.E. policies on education for Aborigines have developed and evolved along lines consistent with changes in D.A.A. policies. Thus, in May 1971 (66) Mr. B.G. Dexter, Director of the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs, outlined Commonwealth policy on Aboriginal early childhood education along lines that emphasised the importance of pre-school education for Aborigines to improve their performance in subsequent schooling. In that statement it was made clear that the inadequate home environment of Aboriginal children was the main reason for their school failure. He said:

> By the time they go to school they have already fallen behind. They have failed to acquire the language structure and the concepts which most children in our society acquire from their parents and from the human and social environment in which they grow up. (67)

A statement from the Commonwealth Department of Education in November 1971 (68) was consistent with this policy outlined by Mr. Dexter. In the same way, the present guidelines from the Commonwealth Department of Education are consistent with D.A.A. policies. This, of course, is not an accident, but (as explained above) arises from the way in which Commonwealth policy on Aboriginal affairs is developed.

It is important to note that the Commonwealth does not allocate funds for pre-school education in the way it does for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education. As already noted, pre-school education in general is funded out of the Children's Services Program administered by the Office of Child Care. Plummer (69) sees this arrangement as being associated with a relatively low priority for pre-school education compared with other areas of education. Plummer argues that we need a comprehensive system of early childhood services together with a national policy. Many others also agree there is a need to develop a comprehensive system and a national policy not only in the early childhood field in general, but also in Aboriginal early childhood education.

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CHAPTER 5

QUEENSLAND

There are approximately 58,000 people of Aboriginal and Islander origin in Queensland (1) with half living in urban centres and the remainder living in reserve communities on the mainland and in the Torres Strait as well as the Aurukun and Mornington Shires.

In Queensland there are three major State bodies responsible for or involved in early childhood education programs for Aboriginal and Islander children; the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement (DAIA), the Education Department and the Creche and Kindergarten Association (C and K). The role of each of these organisations will be examined in turn.

DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER ADVANCEMENT

OVERVIEW

The Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement (DAIA) is the State Department in Queensland responsible for the provision of all services to Aboriginals and Islanders. After the referendum (in 1967) most states handed over responsibility for funding and administration of Aboriginal Affairs to the Commonwealth. This was not so in Queensland where the major body at present responsible for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs is the State Department (DAIA).

The overall policy of the D.A.I.A. as stated in their Annual Report for 1980 (2) "continues to be directed towards integration of Aboriginal and Islander citizens into the mainstream of Australian society". It goes on to say:

> This does not infer that the state's indigenous people will lose their identity but that they are able to live in the general community as an accepted and integral part of it, proud of their race and cultural background, yet in harmony with the broad society of the state.

Funding

D.A.I.A. pre-school programs are funded by both the Commonwealth (via a block grant from the DAA, $343,000 in 1981-82) and by State Government grants. The money is used to run its own pre-school centres as well as to supplement and support programs in community run pre-schools and conduct a small advisory service.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

The State Government has a general policy of providing pre-schooling for any 3-5 year old Aboriginal or Islander child who wishes to have it. By far the largest number of Aboriginal and Islander children in pre-school (before 5) facilities in Queensland are in D.A.I.A. run centres. D.A.I.A. began its involvement in pre-school provisions for children aged 3-5 about 15 years ago. At present D.A.I.A. directly "runs" (i.e. is fully responsible for) 22 pre-school centres (called kindergartens), with a total enrolment of 588 children. D.A.I.A. is responsible for all pre-school provisions in the Torres Strait Islands and for pre-schooling on most of the reserves (the Education Department runs four pre-school centres on reserves).

In addition to the 22 centres that D.A.I.A. runs there are 35 "Community Centres" (i.e. kindergartens or pre-schools managed or run by the local community in some way and often affiliated with the C and K Association, see below) that are in contact with D.A.I.A., for advice, support etc. Thirty of these 35 centres are funded in some way by D.A.I.A., with a total enrolment of 638 Aboriginal and Islander children. The funding operates in terms of the proportion of Aboriginal and Islander children enrolled. If there are 80 percent of Aboriginal and Islander children D.A.I.A. will pay all recurrent expenditure (affiliated kindergartens, see below, receive only 80 percent of salaries and no money for recurrent expenditure from C and K Association) and will pay the extra 20 percent of salary for any Aboriginal or Islander staff. If there are less than 80 percent of Aboriginal and Islander children, D.A.I.A. will fund recurrent expenditure proportionally, but will also cover the extra 20 percent of salary costs for any Aboriginal or Islander staff.

Aims and Orientation of the Programs, Curriculum etc.

A major aim of pre-schooling as provided by D.A.I.A. is to enhance the future school success of Aboriginal and Islander children. Thus, in describing the aims behind D.A.I.A. pre-schooling Des Baker in his paper to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference, 1981, (3) said:

> It was felt that the provision of a pre-school program for children 3-5 years of age would enable children to move into the school situation more confidently and that their success rate at school would be enhanced by the early education gained.

Nevertheless, it is often mentioned that D.A.I.A. centres are not "pre-schools" in the sense of "towards school" in the same way that Education Department pre-schools are. Thus, D.A.I.A. centres have been described as running "early experience" programs. Certainly the age of children in the D.A.I.A. centres (from 3 years to 5 or 6 years) is on average below that for children in Education Department pre-schools (usually aged 4-5 years).

D.A.I.A. centres typically run full-day programs, e.g. 5-6 hours per day, beginning about 8 a.m. and continuing through lunch time until about 2 p.m. five days a week. The actual hours and times per day vary from place to place to suit local needs. The centres take children from about the age of 2 years 9 months until age 6. The exact curriculum will vary from centre to centre and it is difficult to describe "the program" in a general sense. The only way of making comments on "the program" in D.A.I.A. centres is to do so via specific examples. However, Des Baker in his paper to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference, 1981, (4) did describe a "language development program" initiated by officers of the Education Department in 1981 at Cherbourg and Palm Island that was "used as a base for the pre-school program being conducted in Aboriginal and Islander Kindergartens". The aim of the program was described as helping "children to develop facility in the use of language structures of standard English". However, he said:

> It is not the intention of the program to alienate them from their own people or to diminish the potency of their Aboriginal English. If this were to happen, the children would lose the ability to communicate readily with their parents and other members of their own community. The aim of the program is that the children will in time become proficient and secure in the two forms of language, their own and English, each being used by them in its appropriate place.

He went on to say: "The basic principle which integrates all strands of that program is the expansion of the child's concept of himself. The self-concept is the first theme to be introduced ...". He also added that a major difficulty is to adapt these principles to forms suitable for three-year-old children.

Without specific description and observation in individual centres it is impossible to say in what ways the above general description of "the program" applies in each case. Further, the above general description applies to D.A.I.A.-run centres, where less than half the state's Aboriginal and Islander pre-school children attend. More Aboriginal and Islander children, for example, are in "Community Centres" where there is often a substantial proportion of white children in the centre and often with white staff and/or management committees. It is much more difficult to describe "the program" in these centres.

Another general aim of the D.A.I.A. centres is parent involvement. Des Baker, again in his paper to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference, 1981, claimed that encouragement of parent participation was a major emphasis in D.A.I.A. centres. By parent involvement he argued that as well as help in fund-raising activities, much more parent involvement was desired at the level of committee membership (which he said was not high) and in terms of parent participation inside centres, i.e. with the conduct of the program. One view expressed in Queensland was that the expectation of parental involvement was a factor inhibiting many Aboriginal and Islander parents sending their child to pre-school facilities because parents lacked the desire and confidence to become involved.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

"Since 1973 the Department of Education has been implementing a program to provide one year of free pre-school education for all 4-5 year old children whose parents desire it" (5). For 1981 the Education Department (Mr. R. Spiers, Director of Pre-school Education) estimates that about ninety percent of children in Queensland in their year prior to entering Primary School are attending some pre-school facility, with seventy-four percent of these being in Education Department Pre-schools in about 800 units mainly located in the grounds of State Primary Schools, with the other sixteen percent mainly in D.A.I.A. of C and K Association facilities. Thus, the Education Department is the principal provider of pre-schooling in Queensland. Included in this is a substantial role in the provision of pre-school services to Aboriginal and Islander children.

The philosophy of current pre-school education is described in the "State Pre-school Teachers Handbook" (6) and represents a restatement of principles outlined in the Director-General of Education's 1975 booklet "Pre-school Facilities" (7). The functions of pre-schools were outlined in those publications as:

(1) to provide a bridge by which the young child can be assisted to make a smooth transition from home to school;

(2) to encourage parent interest and participation in the education process;

(3) to promote the physical and mental health of the young child;

(4) to develop those abilities, skills and attitudes which will aid the educational progress of the young child.

Neither of these books seems to say anything about pre-schooling for Aboriginal or Islander children per se, nor about "special" education for any other minority group. A reason for this is that "The main aims for Aboriginal pre-school education as found in State Pre-School Centres are those for all children who attend State Pre-School Centres (Miss U. Modder, Senior Pre-School Adviser,) (8) Miss Modder then lists the following as these general aims:

(a) to assist the child to develop a positive self-image and to accept others;

(b) to encourage the child to become self-reliant in learning and to exercise choice;

(c) to promote learning based on the child's level of development and range of experiences of importance to his future education in the areas of language use and its associated skills, concept formation, perceptual activity, and problem solving;

(d) to assist the child to develop a range of appropriate social and physical skills;

(e) to foster the child's ability to think imaginatively and to express himself creatively through music, movement and various art media;

(f) to promote the physical and mental health of the young child;

The Education Department provision of pre-school education comes in three forms;

(a) for larger schools (down to about 90 children total enrolment) a fully autonomous pre-school may be provided within the school grounds;

(b) for small schools (enrolment of about 60-90) the school may have an "Early Education Class" which is a pre-school/lower primary composite; and

(c) for very small schools or isolated children there is a Pre-school Correspondence Program. This program requires a high degree of literacy on the part of parents and is used mainly by white middle class children on properties rather than by remote Aboriginal or Islander groups.

It can be seen that the philosophies underlying pre-schooling in the Education Department are in substantial accord with mainstream views of pre-schooling as they occur in Australia. It can also be seen that in general terms the purposes of pre-schooling for Aboriginal and Islander children are seen as being the same as for all children in Queensland.

Funding

In 1981 Queensland received $6.605 million from the Federal Government (Children's Services Program, Office of Child Care) for pre-schooling. This is used for both Education Department pre-schools and kindergartens funded via the C and K Association. In 1976 the Commonwealth's contribution to pre-schooling meant that about 75 percent of salary costs in the pre-school area were covered. In 1981 the Federal contribution met only 28 percent of salary costs. Other expenses of pre-schools and kindergartens have to be made up either by State money or by fund-raising, fees, donations etc.

D.A.A. provides funds to the Education Department for Aboriginal/Islander education, but none of it is intended for pre-school education. The reason for this seems to be that by the mid 1970's when the Education Department began its involvement in pre-schooling, D.A.A.'s funds were being restricted. In consequence, funding for Aboriginal/Islander pre-schooling in the Education Department comes from the general pool of Commonwealth-State funds for pre-schooling. However, this does not mean that the Education Department treats pre-schools with substantial Aboriginal/Islander enrolment according to automatic criteria applicable to all pre-schools. Thus, the Department has a policy of "responsivity" and, according to the local situation and the availability of funds, additional facilities and staff may be provided.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

The Education Department conducts pre-schools in four Aboriginal and Islander communities, i.e. Mornington Island, Aurukun, Cherbourg and Doomadgee. Because of their location, these pre-schools mainly cater for Aboriginal and Islander children. In addition, they have other pre-schools with a high percentage of Aboriginal or Islander children. These are at centres such as Cunnamulla, St. George, Eidsvold, Jurunda, Richmond and Mossman. Miss U. Modder, Senior Pre-School Advisor, lists the following Early Education Classes with a significant number of Aboriginal/Islander children: Camooweal, Boulia, Dirranbandi, Dajarra, Cooktown, Duaringa. Finally, many other Educational Department pre-schools would have small numbers of Aboriginal/Islander children enrolled. Details of numbers of Aboriginal children in Education Department pre-schools are not officially available, due to Queensland Government policy opposed to the separation of Aborigines as a group separate from the rest of the community.

The Education Department's pre-schools mainly enroll 4 to 5 year old children (they can accept 3 year olds with special needs) and run on a sessional basis. D.A.I.A. kindergartens and C and K Association kindergartens routinely accept 3 year olds. In some localities with both a kindergarten and a State pre-school a child may first enroll in the kindergarten at age 3 and move to the pre-school at age 4. This transfer from kindergarten to pre-school does not always occur and in a few localities the only facility available is a kindergarten and children attend this until they begin school.

Aims and Orientation of the Programs, Curriculum etc.

It is difficult to make statements about "the program" as it applies in individual pre-schools which go beyond the general aims already outlined and that apply to all pre-schools. As Miss Modder (Senior Pre-school Adviser) stated: "The pre-school teacher decides what should form the basis for the program in the pre-school". In view of the Education Department's philosophy that State pre-school education "places its main concern on the development and progress of the individual child within the context of his home and community environment" (9) it would be expected that the precise program in pre-schools would vary with the local environment and needs of individuals. Thus, there are two sources of variation in program between individual pre-schools: the staff, and the nature of physical and social environment in which the pre-school is placed. It would be expected therefore, that pre-schools usually develop an individual flavour.

Some of the variety among individual programs can be illustrated by looking at examples. Descriptions are available for pre-school centres at Aurukun, Kuranda, Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Dajarra and Inala. Sue Thwaites described the situation at Aurukun in her paper to the National Conference of the N.A.E.C., 1981. (10) She argued that at Aurukun the general aims of pre-schooling as outlined by the Education Department were adapted to the needs of the local Aboriginal community. She listed as the aims:

1. to be aware of the environmental impact on the lifestyle of the community. Here she included things such as the season, local sacred sites, kinship customs etc.,

2. to be identified as a Community Centre that welcomes mothers and other significant adults (i.e. relatives and resource people) to participate in programs which are designed to stimulate and encourage the children to express themselves in a variety of ways (i.e. language, art, craft, movement etc.)

3. to foster a community awareness of the importance of the pre-school-aged children being exposed to a readiness program before entering Grade 1.

4. to attempt to begin to bridge the barrier between school and community.

The situation at Kuranda Pre-school has been described by the teacher in an article to be published in Links (11). Kuranda is a multi-racial pre-school, with large numbers of both Aboriginal and white children. Aboriginal children face two difficulties at Kuranda; the first is adapting to the situation of pre-school per se, with its routines, demands, expectations, activities etc. that may be unfamiliar or alien. The second is to adapt to the white culture as it is reflected in the presence of white children and white staff in a white-run institution. The program at Kuranda has to take into account both forms of adaptation for Aboriginal children and has to be suitable for both Aboriginal children and white children to attend. In many ways then, the program at a mixed race pre-school differs from that in an Aboriginal centre situated on a reserve. And, the program for an Aboriginal kindergarten in an urban situation is likely to differ again. The difficulty of describing with any precision the ways in which programs may differ is that the only information available is scattered and of an anecdotal type.

The Family Education Program at Doomadgee is yet another example of an Aboriginal pre-school program with a unique flavour. (12) Rose Cunnington describes the program as being for mother and children in the year prior to attendance at pre-school. Thus, the program includes mainly 3 and 4 year old children. The program is conducted partly in a specially constructed cottage in the grounds of the Doomadgee State School and is run by three Aboriginal women trained in the program. Families attend the cottage once a week. The program exposes children to standard English as well as much of the environment and activities they will meet at pre-school. Mothers are involved and participate, learning more about the nature and role of education as well as the development of their children. In addition to attendance at the cottage, the program contains a home visiting component, where visits are made to the homes of children who will attend pre-school in the following year. In addition, children are gradually introduced to and exposed to the pre-school for two afternoons a week for eight weeks during third term.

Mornington Island provides yet another environment and a unique community. Narelle Sellar (13) outlines some of the flavour of the Mornington Island community and its pre-school. She notes that the population of about 750 (in 1978) was made up of three main groups: Mornington Islanders, Bentinck Islanders and an assorted group of mainlanders. She says: "Wherever possible we attempt to have teacher-aides, helpers and visitors to the school from each of these groups". The pre-school runs from 8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and includes a lunch program funded by D.A.I.A.. In addition, Sellar notes the advent of a school bus as one of the factors helping to overcome problems and increase attendance. The article gives examples of the way in which the pre-school program is adapted to the local environment. She says: "The pre-school program is normally the same as would be found in an average pre-school, but with some variation".

At Dajarra, pre-schooling is provided in the form of an Early Education Class. Dale Partridge (14) sees many advantages to the integration of pre-school and year one children within a school environment.

> One of the main advantages is that the Aboriginal child can learn via association with older children. The pre-school children are placed in a purpose built early childhood classroom operating on a regular program of five half-days per week.

He places much weight on the development of self-confidence in the children as a basis for motivation and future learning. He also lists language development as of key importance and goes on to say:

> It is the aim of the Early Education Class at Dajarra to provide background experiences lacking in the child's home environment. The Aboriginal child's whole life centres around one particular environment. Our task as teachers is to provide alternative experiences and to enrich these experiences using school resources and local knowledge.

A project at the Inala Family Education Centre has been described by Henry (15). The project grew out of the earlier program carried out by Watts and Henry that was designed to help urban Aboriginal mothers become more effective educators of their 4 and 5 year old children. The present program focuses on younger children (6 months to about 3 years). The project involved an Aboriginal parent educator working with mothers in order to:

> (a) increase the mother's knowledge of their children's stages of development;
> (b) enhance the mother's role in promoting that development; and
> (c) enhance the mutual responsiveness and enjoyment of the mothers and children through growth-promoting activities congruent with their own interests and life style. (16)

This brief outline of some programs gives an idea of the range and diversity of situations in which early childhood services for Aborigines and Islanders occur and the wide variation of approaches that have been taken.

THE CRECHE AND KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION

OVERVIEW

The Creche and Kindergarten Association (C and K Association) of Queensland describes itself as:

> A voluntary non-profit, non-government organisation mainly concerned with the care and education of children 0-5 years of age, but also recently extending to children up to 8 years through, before and after school and vacation programs. (17)

The C and K Association fully manages and funds a small group (12 listed in the 1980 Annual Report (18)) of Branch Centres including four mobile kindergartens, three day care centres, two family day care centres and three regular kindergartens. Its main role, however, is in the help it gives to "local communities to establish and operate their own local non-profit centres" and in its distribution of State and Commonwealth funds to eligible kindergartens. Eligible kindergartens are those which satisfy the criteria/standards for affiliation (see below). Such kindergartens are described as "Community" kindergartens in the sense that they are community controlled non-profit associations. Another important role for the C and K Association is its Advisory function. Its Advisory staff visit affiliated centres and those in contact with the Association "assisting both staff and committees with advice regarding the operation of their centres". (19)

The C and K Association's role in Aboriginal and Islander Early Childhood facilities extends over all aspects of its functioning. Thus, some of its own Branch Centres have substantial Aboriginal and Islander children, some of its Affiliated Centres have many Aboriginal and Islander children, some of the non-affiliated Centres in contact with the Association have significant numbers of Aboriginal and Islander children and, lastly, part of its Advisory staff is funded specifically to help centres with substantial numbers of Aboriginal and Islander children.

Funding

The total 1980/81 budget allocation to the Community Kindergarten Movement (i.e. C and K Association and Community Kindergartens) in Queensland was $4,577,280 which included Commonwealth funds amounting to $1,946,870 with the balance coming from State resources. (20) The funding is partly administered by the Pre-school section of the Queensland Department of Education, which advises the Queensland Government on the levels of funding for C and K Association. Of the total funds, $1,253,629 was used for the administration of the C and K Association and the running of its Branch Centres. In addition to this, State and Commonwealth money was received by the C and K Association on behalf of Community Kindergartens and disbursed by the Association.

The question of funding is important not only at the level of Government Departments, grants and the overall C and K Association. It is also important at the level of individual kindergartens. To obtain funding via the C and K Association the initiative for the establishment of a Pre-school facility must come from the local community (although C and K Association is often a catalyst in the process). The community must make application and conform to various criteria to obtain different kinds of grants for (a) establishing a new centre, (b) upgrading an existing kindergarten, or (c) recurrent costs and salary costs.

Documents distributed to community groups and kindergartens by both the C and K Association and the D.A.I.A. clearly show the variety of funding possibilities. Possible receipts are listed under the following categories:

1. Combined Commonwealth/State Grant paid through the Creche and Kindergarten Association. This is the normal grant paid to centres affiliated (see below) with the C and K Association. It covers about 80 percent of salary costs. Of that 80 percent, about 28 percent comes from Commonwealth grants.

2. Direct Department of Aboriginal Affairs grant. This is a direct grant-in-aid that may come from the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

3. Direct D.A.A. Area Funding. This is a possible D.A.A. grant to an Area for Aboriginal Services.

4. Special Government Grant Funding paid by the Department of Education. A centre that has not reached affiliation standard may apply to the Education Department of Queensland to help them reach affiliation standard.

5. Direct Office of Child Care - Commonwealth. It is possible to obtain direct support from the O.C.C.

6. Extended Services Grant for Non-Affiliated Centres paid through Creche and Kindergarten Association. This is a grant paid by the Office of Child Care as an incentive for centres to integrate and extend services.

7. D.A.I.A. Grants (see earlier section on D.A.I.A.) for recurrent expenses, salaries and capital works.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

From its 1981 records the C and K Association lists 36 kindergartens, both affiliated and non-affiliated as well as its own Branch Centres, with Aboriginal and Islander enrolments totalling 570. Eighteen of these had Aboriginal or Islander enrolments above 10 children. Only one kindergarten was listed with the total enrolment being Aboriginal or Islander children; the rest varied from about 3 percent of enrolments to about 90 percent of enrolments being Aborigines or Islanders. Most of the listed kindergartens were in country areas with only four being in Brisbane. As well, almost all the centres were also listed by D.A.I.A. as being "in contact" with D.A.I.A. and 24 of them were receiving some financial support from D.A.I.A..

Aims and Orientation of the Programs, Curriculum etc.

An affiliated kindergarten is an autonomous association making its own decisions, for example, on whom it will employ as staff and the nature of the curriculum in the kindergarten. The C and K Association is not an organisation that formulates and propagates a curriculum. This is not to say it doesn't influence the program conducted in kindergartens, because it clearly does have an influence in terms of both its Advisory staff and its requirements for affiliation.

The criteria for affiliation require that the centre be community controlled, i.e. administered by an elected committee of parents. In addition it must have an approved constitution and meet standards in the following areas:

(a) a qualified kindergarten teacher

(b) an approved program

(c) an approved ratio of staff to children

(d) a building of approved design, and

(e) adequate and suitable equipment.

In the Kindergarten Handbook of the Creche and Kindergarten Association (21) two basic types of program are given:

(a) full day program of five and a half hours per day with one group attending five days per week or one attending two days and another attending three days per week, and

(b) half day program, with a morning session of three hours, on five mornings per week and an afternoon session of two and a half hours on three afternoons per week.

Aboriginal and Islander parents are reported to prefer the full-day program. The Handbook also gives details of building and equipment needed, down to the number and sizes of blocks and the number and sizes of paint brushes, prior to Affiliation.

To maintain funding, kindergartens must report or be reported on quarterly. Those with Aboriginal or Islander enrolments and supported by D.A.I.A. are reported on by the C and K Association Advisers and include statements about the curriculum. There exists the potential for an analysis of the program for Aboriginal and Islander children via an investigation of these C and K Association reports to D.A.I.A..

PARTICIPATION RATES

There are two elements to participation rates of Aboriginal and Islander chidren in early childhood services. The first deals with the proportion of children in a given catchment area for a pre-school centre that are enrolled. The second concerns the attendance rates of those enrolled. Official statistics on participation rates were not available from organisations in Queensland involved in Aboriginal and Islander Pre-schools (they are not available from other States either). Information on participation rates comes from anecdotal reports of the general picture or reports of particular cases. Impressions of participation rates conveyed by officers of various organisations in Queensland all revealed a common pattern. This was that on Reserves the participation rates tended to be high, with up to 90 percent of eligible children being enrolled. However, because pre-school is not compulsory attendance rates were often around 50 percent. At the other extreme were Aboriginal and Islander children in the general community with a "white run" kindergarten or pre-scool being the facility available to them. In such cases rates of enrolment vary, but the consensus was that often 10 percent or less of eligible Aboriginal and Islander children used the facility.

The low levels of participation in some "white run" facilities was commented on in Office of Child Care reports. In one such report a country town was described as having "approximately 450 Aboriginal and Islander residents in the town with 30 children aged 3-5 years who would benefit from kindergarten and pre-school attendance. Only 3 actually attend the pre-school at present". About another country town where a grant for a playgroup was sought, an O.C.C. report said: "For years there had been a glaring absence of Aboriginal children from the kindergarten and pre-school in the area".

Hughenden was mentioned by several people in Queensland as an example of low participation by Aboriginal children in white-run facilities. It seems that in 1979 there were more Aboriginal than white children in the community yet there were almost no Aborigines enrolled in the local "white-run" Education Department pre-school or the local kindergarten. An Aboriginal woman then began a playgroup partly at the initiative of the D.A.A. and a local social worker. The pre-school teacher was asked to become involved to provide help and guidance. This led to personal contact between the teacher and the Aboriginal mothers and as a result many (8-10) Aboriginal children enrolled in the pre-school. This case illustrates both the low level of participation that can occur and shows something of conditions under which participation may improve.

Contact with Aboriginal mothers also improved participation rates of the Paddington kindergarten run by the C and K Association. In their 1980 Annual Report (23) they described a pilot scheme at the Paddington kindergarten involving an Aboriginal Liaison Officer (funded by DAA) whose role was "to visit Aboriginal families, interpret the program, encourage the enrolment of children and Aboriginal parent participation. Seven children were enrolled as a result of this program".

The difficulty of arriving at participation rates must also be emphasised. The hazards of estimating participation rates is shown by the variation in enrolments from one year to another in some D.A.I.A. kindergartens. Variations in enrolments may arise either because of differences in participation rates from year to year with a constant number of children or it may reflect differences in the number of children in the pool, either because of population movements or because of variations in the birth rate from year to year. Fluctuations in enrolments can be seen by a comparison of figures for the same centres over the years 1979, 1980 and 1981. Boopa-Werem Kindergarten, Cairns, in 1979 had a total enrolment of 45 with 33 Aboriginal/Islander children. In 1980 the same kindergarten had a total enrolment of 60 with 42 Aboriginal/Islander children. For 1981, the figure for

Aboriginal/Islander children at Roopa Werem was 61. Injelinji Pre-School Association Centre at Mount Isa in 1979 had a total enrolment of 75 with 50 Aboriginal/Islander children. In 1980 the respective figures were 62 and 52 while for 1981 it had 40 Aboriginal/Islander children enrolled. Some of these fluctuations may be due to changes in procedures from year to year in methods of obtaining and recording enrolments. Clearly, before anything of substance can be said about participation rates, more needs to be known about the factors influencing apparently substantial fluctuations in enrolments from year to year. If, for example, the variations are due to population movements it would be hazardous to attempt any estimate of participation rates from claimed stable population estimates.

Comments on individual programs (e.g. see Education Department) suggested that some teachers had difficulties getting Aboriginal and Islander children to participate. An examination of individual programs, however, also shows some of the factors which tend to increase participation, e.g. provision of a bus to transport children, visits and meetings to encourage parents, efforts at adaptation of the program to suit the needs of the local community etc. Thus, the overall picture is one of participation rates being somewhat volatile, with efforts in various directions being needed to produce high levels of participation in contrast, for example, to upper middle class urban whites where rates of participation are high with little or no special encouragement. Nevertheless, because there are no adequate statistics available on participation rates, what is clearly needed is a detailed study of all children within the catchment area of several selected facilities to determine numbers enrolled and rates of attendance. (The Education Department in Queensland plans to conduct such a study in 1982).

STAFFING

In both the Education Department and C and K Association Centres the typical staff pattern is for a trained white pre-school or kindergarten teacher together with an Aboriginal or Islander teacher assistant/aide. In contrast, many of the D.A.I.A. centres are fully staffed by Aborigines or Islanders and the playgroups funded by O.C.C. are almost totally staffed by Aborigines or Islanders. However, the Aborigines and Islanders running D.A.I.A. centres do not have teacher qualifications and those running playgroups funded by O.C.C. have no formal qualifications in child development or teaching.

Education Department teachers appointed to teach Aboriginal or Islander children are encouraged to complete the program in Aboriginal Education at Townsville C.A.E., but it is not a prerequisite for appointment. All teachers appointed by the Education Department to Aboriginal or Islander communities receive a one week orientation workshop. They are then supported by 31 Advisory Teachers for Pre-schools who are mainly appointed to one of nine Education Department regions. There are no officers in the Department responsible for Aboriginal and Islander Pre-school education, but there are officers whose responsibility concerns the education of Aboriginal and Islander children and they work in consultation with the Pre-school Directorate. They include people working in the Aboriginal and Islander section of the Education Department where there is an Aboriginal Education Officer, a Curriculum officer, a Teacher Aide Trainer and a Schools visitor who acts as a resource person. The Aboriginal and Islander Aides also receive support and training from the Advisory staff as well as training "on the job" by the teacher. The Education Department employs Aboriginal or Islander Aides at Cherbourg, Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Aurukun, Duaringa, Eidsvold, Cunnamulla, Dajara, Comooweal, Boulia and Dirranbandi.

Of the 22 D.A.I.A. run centres, 15 are fully staffed with Aboriginal and Islander staff. In total, D.A.I.A. employs 63 Aboriginal and Islander staff in their kindergartens and 7 non-Aboriginal teachers. In the community centres (i.e affiliated with the C and K Association), there are 44 Aborigines and Islanders employed as aides.

Of the 63 Aboriginal and Islander staff in the D.A.I.A. centres, 22 hold a Kindercraft Certificate following completion of the 18 month training program conducted by the Kindercraft Association. This course is for Aboriginal and Islander staff who are already working or intend to work as assistants in kindergartens. Students in the program are supported by grants from the Commonwealth Department of Education. At present about half the students come from urban areas and half from Aboriginal and Islander communities. Twenty have graduated in recent years and at present 12 students are enrolled.

To gain entry to the program students are required to have completed year 10 of school, although not necessarily successfully. This requirement may be waived for mature age students. The qualification is recognised throughout Queensland for work as a kindergarten assistant and entitles the person to a higher salary. In 1981 the Kindercraft Association ran a 10 week refresher program for previous graduates. Students are often referred to the program by D.A.I.A. staff and D.A.I.A. guarantees employment to those students from Aboriginal and Islander Communities.

It can be seen that many D.A.I.A. kindergartens are staffed by people whose highest qualification is the Kindercraft Certificate and who don't have teacher training. A difficulty associated with not having teacher training is that those centres cannot reach levels required for affiliation with the C and K Association and hence they cannot join the mainstream of pre-school facilities with general Commonwealth/State support.

D.A.I.A. also provides advisory services and support functions for staff in its own centres as well as C and K Association Centres in contact with D.A.I.A.. The D.A.I.A. employs Aboriginal and Islander advisers (with Kindercraft Certificates) who act as advisers in the Torres Straits. In addition they employ one other person as an adviser, who works with D.A.I.A.'s 22 centres and all other kindergartens in contact with D.A.I.A.. D.A.I.A. also publishes a journal "Talkabout" which has ideas for assistants and teachers in running their program. D.A.I.A. believes that "Talkabout" acts in some senses as a correspondence course for staff. In addition, D.A.I.A. maintains a resource library with curriculum materials available to staff in kindergartens.

As already mentioned, the C and K Association Kindergartens (Branch, Affiliated and non-Affiliated) are staffed with trained white teachers and in addition there are 44 Aboriginal or Islander Assistants (funded by DAIA). The C and K Association also maintains an extensive Advisory service to kindergartens. The 1980 Annual Report lists ten staff in the "Advisory Service". Six of these are attached to the Brisbane office and three are in regions. The Office of Child Care funds the C and K Association for one Adviser for Aboriginal and Islander children. At present the C and K Association does not employ a specific person for that role, but instead expects each of their Advisers to perform the role as and when they attend kindergartens with Aboriginal and Islander enrolments. A review by the Office of Child Care resulted in a request to the C and K Association that a specific person, preferably an Aboriginal or Islander, be employed to fill the role of Adviser to Kindergartens with Aboriginal and Islander enrolments. In response, it was suggested it may be difficult to find an appropriately qualified Aboriginal or Islander to fill the role and that it would substantially increase travel costs if the one person were to service the entire State.

Playgroups funded by the Office of Child Care are staffed by Aborigines and Islanders, but at present the staff have no formal qualifications and have no official support or Advisory services they can rely on. Advisers from the C and K Association or D.A.I.A. would go to playgroups if requested, but the travelling distances severely limit such visits.

Various comments were made about the role of Aboriginal and Islander aides or assistants. Certainly their role varied according to the centre in which they were employed. Aides in the C and K "community centres" were often commented on. Sometimes their role was described as carrying out menial tasks. At times they seemed to be placed in the role of "policemen" in the Aboriginal and Islander community, visiting families, checking up on children, mediating between problems in the centre and the family. D.A.A. and others said that having an Aboriginal aide in a C and K "community centre" helped communication between the centre and the Aboriginal/Islander community and fostered participation by the Aboriginal and Islander community. In other areas of Aboriginal Education (Primary and Secondary) it seems there is a trend towards "home-school liaison officers" rather than "aides" or "assistants", with the role of linking between the school and the Aboriginal/Islander community being emphasized. This trend to liaison officers has not occurred in the pre-school area in Queensland. However, Victoria seems to be moving in that direction by giving the Aboriginal aides time for liaison type work.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ISSUES

The purpose of this section is to outline issues, problem areas, difficulties that need to be overcome, potential positive developments for the future etc. that were identified by those working in the field of early childhood education for Aboriginal and Islander children in Queensland.

In his paper to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference, 1981, Des Baker from D.A.I.A. (23) identified training as possibly the most important issue to be resolved in the future. Specifically, the need seems to be to provide opportunities for qualifications above the Kindercraft course for Aboriginal and Islander personnel. It is not just things like the quality of the program and the self-esteem and autonomy of Aboriginal and Islander staff, but the qualifications issue also relates to the whole funding and organisation of pre-schooling. Without teacher qualifications the centres run by Aboriginal and Islander staff cannot become autonomous "community run" centres affiliated with the C and K Association and funded in the same way as other pre-school centres.

The question of affiliation with the C and K Association is also related to a second area for future development, namely parental involvement. The criteria for affiliation also require that the pre-school centre be community run and managed. Clearly this means that parents must become involved in the sense of forming a parent committee to manage the centre. With interest at this level it would be hoped and expected that parents would also become involved in other ways. Parent and community involvement is also taken up by Rosalie Racite (24) as a problem area. She sees it as the most vital and difficult part of developing meaningful pre-school programs in Aboriginal and Islander communities.

Sue Thwaites, a teacher with the Education Department, expressed her views in a paper to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference, 1981 (25) and identified several "areas of concern in Pre-school education". Firstly, she believes kindergartens presently run by D.A.I.A. "should be under the direction of the Department of Education". She feels this would reduce staffing problems and give teachers more of a support system and foster liaison between pre-school and school. Secondly, she points to difficulties confronting non-Aboriginal staff when working in Aboriginal pre-schools. She notes they often have not been fully trained for the various roles required of them (e.g. social worker, trainer of Aboriginal staff) and the problems which arise in developing a relationship with the local community. She also outlines difficulties for Aboriginal staff, partly again due to inadequate training. The third problem area she mentions is that of community involvment, a vital but difficult task if one is to obtain participation and a worthwhile and relevant program. Fourthly, she raises the question of transition from pre-school to primary school and outlines some of the efforts needed to ease the transition. Lastly, she sees a need for a more regular and improved advisory service to teachers in the pre-school field and better training for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff.

Miss U. Modder (Senior Pre-school Adviser, Education Department), outlined three problem areas:

1. finding staff with appropriate qualification and training. This would also include finding staff with the desire to teach in remote Aboriginal and Islander Communities;

2. the itenerant nature of the Aboriginal people, although this is not a problem in Aboriginal or Islander Communities; and

3. reluctance of Aboriginal parents to bring their children to pre-school, although the extent to which this is a problem of Aboriginal parents or of the pre-school facilities and pre-school staff is not clear.

Professor B. Watts (University of Queensland) was concerned at several aspects of Aboriginal and Islander pre-school education. She felt there has not yet been a consensus reached on goals or purposes of pre-schooling for Aboriginal and Islander children and that evaluation of present programs, including an examination of outcomes, process variables and cost-benefit analyses, is needed.

Positive developments were identified by some people and included the fact that interest in early childhood programs is growing amongst the Aboriginal and Islander communities. As well, there are programs already being run that some people described as progressive. Two such programs mentioned are one at Wandarrah Pre-school and Community Centre and the Home Teaching Program operating from the West End Kurilpa Kindergarten.

Low participation rates of Aboriginal and Islander children in local white-run pre-schools and kindergartens was also identified by some as a problem. Some of the reasons given for this low participation included a shortage of qualified Aboriginal and Islander teachers, inadequate training of white teachers and an inability of white staff to adapt their programs to the background and needs of Aboriginal and Islander children. There is a need for more qualified Aboriginal and Islander teachers as well as more Advisers with knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Islander people and their cultures.

Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland are requesting rights to the development of separate distinctive services which reflect their own identity and culture and are managed by themselves. It has been argued that these rights to identity and self-management are not always recognised by Queensland Government

State Departments. Because of its role, the State Education Department is concerned with the provision of early educational services administered by itself rather than with the development of educational services administered by black community groups.

If Aboriginal and Islander groups wish to manage their own kindergarten they must develop their own management committee and then apply for funding, which may come from as many as four sources. The funding situation may be confusing, especially for inexperienced management committees. This point has been taken up by Ailsa Burns (26) in a slightly different context, but her arguments are relevant here.

Burns is critical of the "Community-based" funding policy for child care facilities. She is critical of the responsibility placed on "Communities" to

> develop proposals for child care services, seek out suitable land and premises, write effective submissions based on documented descriptions of the area and its needs; and then, if they are lucky enough to get the go-ahead, launch themselves in the business of becoming instant experts in law, accountancy, real estate, personnel recruitment and management, and of course, child care. Alice in Wonderland indeed! (27).

Insofar as funding for projects supported by the Office of Child Care or the D.A.A. or C and K Association and to some extent D.A.I.A. is "Community-based" in the way Burns describes, it would be expected that "the Community" may suffer difficulties or hardships in obtaining the services it may need or want. One of the solutions Burns suggests is "A reversal of policy to a centrally planned program akin to that of the schools system". She thinks this is "a very unlikely outcome, due to the great costs involved, and the major commitment that has been made to the community approach both in money and in hearts and minds". (28) Her conclusion seems to be that the present system, by and large, will continue and that funds will be even more restricted in the future, making competition even greater for available funds. If this conclusion holds true for the provision of pre-school services to Aboriginal and Islander communities it suggests that unless they can mobilise community resources to initiate proposals and manage facilities they will find themselves in an increasingly disadvantaged position.

If Aboriginal and Islander groups are to be expected to manage their own centres, then it was suggested they may often need some help or training to give them the skills and/or confidence to organise, manage and participate in a community run facility.

A final problem area identified dealt with funding. Comments were made about the role of different funding sources and the apparently limited liaison and communication between different funding sources, especially when State and Commonwealth bodies are involved. Certainly there does not appear to be any overall planning between funding bodies. The Office of Child Care is therefore sometimes found to be filling gaps and not always in the most appropriate fashion. This was seen in those cases where it supported playgroups while the apparent need was for a kindergarten or pre-school

A funding issue was also raised in terms of the procedure whereby the D.A.A. funds the D.A.I.A. via a block grant. The philosophy of the D.A.A. involves encouragement and support of programs under Aboriginal management. By implication this means a commitment to more direct grants to Aboriginal and Islander bodies or Institutions and away from a block State Grant to D.A.I.A.. This may or may not happen, but it would be consistent with the D.A.A. policy and would give the D.A.A. a potential for a closer monitoring of the allocation of its funds. However, a concern was expressed that if the D.A.A. moved towards Grants-in-Aid and away from the block Grant to the State, Aboriginal and Islander pre-school provisions may suffer because the orientation of the D.A.A. is towards funding the initial stages of new programs and then handing them over to the State or private organisations.

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SUMMARY TABLE: QUEENSLAND

Administration	Three state bodies are involved in the provision of early childhood education programs: (i) the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement (DAIA); (ii) the Department of Education (D/E); and (iii) the Creche and Kindergarten Association (C and KA). Of these, the DAIA enrols the greatest number of Aboriginal and Islander children.
Age of Admission	DAIA admits all children from 3 to 5 years upon parental request; D/E provides one full year of pre-schooling for all 4 to 5 year olds; C and KA is a voluntary organisation concerned with the care and education of children 0 to 5 years of age in a variety of settings.
Funding	DAIA is funded by block grants from Commonwealth (via DAA) and State Governments; D/E from the Commonwealth (28 of salary costs from OCC), the remainder from State grants, parent fund-raising and fees; C and KA from Commonwealth grants (variety of sources) and State contributions.
Aims and Philosophies	The DAIA seeks to enhance future school success via full day programs (5 to 6 hours) that encourage parental participation The aims of D/E pre-schools are the same for Aborigines as for all other children: smooth transition from home to school; positive self-image; self reliance in learning; appropriate social, physical and creative development; etc. Each C and KA centre is autonomous and decides the nature of its own program with no outside direction.
Enrolments	In 1981 DAIA had 638 Aboriginal and Islander enrolments, the C and KA 570 at pre-school level. The D/E does not maintain separate data on Aboriginal children and figures are not available.
Participation Rates	Impossible to calculate, hence based on anecdotal reports. On Aboriginal reserves and communities up to 90% of eligible children are enrolled, although actual attendance probably is closer to 50% . In those metropolitan and country town areas where Aboriginal and Islander children attend general community pre-schools as far as 10% of those eligible actually attend.
Staffing	The typical pattern for D/E and C and KA pre-schools is that of trained white pre-school teacher plus Aboriginal assistant/aide. For the DAIA, however, 15 of the 22 pre-schools were fully staffed by Aborigines in 1981. A significant feature of all three organisations are the extensive support and advisory services available to teachers.

CHAPTER 6

VICTORIA

In comparison with other States and the Northern Territory, Victoria has a small Aboriginal population. The total Aboriginal population was given in the Aboriginal Education Services Information Circular, 1980, (1) as about 14,000.

The Health Commission of Victoria via its Pre-school Child Development Branch is the main body responsible for pre-school services in Victoria. The D.A.A. and S.C.F. also have a significant role while some important recent Aboriginal initiatives supported by O.C.C. funds have occurred. An inspection of Education Department records showed no Aboriginal children aged 4 years, and hence the Education Department is not discussed.

THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD DEVELOPMENT BRANCH, HEALTH COMMISSION OF VICTORIA.

OVERVIEW

The Act to establish the Health Commission of Victoria (1977) defines the functions of the Commission as "the overseeing, supervision, maintaining and co-ordination of health services in Victoria." Among other things the definition of health services includes "services for the care of pre-school children". The Pre-school Child Development Branch is the body within the Health Commission responsible for services for pre-school children and hence the administration of Victoria Government policy which "favours provision of one year of free pre-school education with the emphasis on multi use of buildings and regionalisation of advisory services working closely with local government and community agencies" (2). Among the objectives of the Branch are "to assist local communities in assessing early childhood needs, to foster adequate standards for health and development ..." (3).

Pre-school Aboriginal children are not, by-and-large, singled out for special provisions by the Pre-school Child Development Branch. They are, in the main, expected to participate in existing local pre-school facilities, and Aboriginal groups have the same opportunity as other groups for developing their own facility and obtaining a subsidy - providing it satisfies the requirements of staff, equipment etc. However, the Health Commission does have an administrative role as described in Aboriginal Educational Services in Victoria (4) where it says: "The Health Commission is the Victorian State Government body responsible for the provision of special pre-school education services for Aborigines, funded through grants from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs".

Funding

State and Commonwealth money (from the Children's Services Program) for pre-school facilities is distributed by the Pre-school Child Development Branch in the form of subsidies. The subsidy covers such things as the salary of a trained teacher and an untrained assistant, an operating cost grant, a bulk workers' compensation scheme and an Advisory Service. The total expenditure of the Pre-school Child Development Branch in 1979-80 (5) was given as $32 million, with "subsidies to Pre-school centres" making up by far the largest section of that expenditure at over $28 million.

The subsidies may go to individual communities responsible for a single kindergarten, but they may also go to local councils, Churches or to the Free Kindergarten Union who then organise and conduct more than one Pre-school facility. The Health Commission also receives money from the D.A.A. to administer the "Aboriginal Pre-school Assistants' Scheme", which is described below.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

There is a range of Pre-school services supported by Government subsidies. "The kindergarten, offering a two and a half to three hour program for children during the year prior to entry to primary school continues to be the main service. However, there has been an increase in centres providing regular full-day, part-time or occasional care".(6) The 1978-79 Annual Report of the Pre-school Branch (7) listed 1,114 kindergartens in Victoria with a total enrolment of 58,004 children. In addition to kindergartens, it lists 63 "Play Centres" with a total enrolment of 1,770 children and 51 "Toddlers Groups" with a total enrolment of 1,846. The Annual Report of the Pre-school Child Development Branch, 1979-1980, (8) lists four types of Day Care facilities covering those integrated with kindergartens, to State and Commonwealth supported centres and private centres.

Records of the Pre-school Child Development Branch showed that in July 1980 there were a total of 112 Aboriginal children enrolled in 39 kindergartens. About 60 percent of these kindergartens were shown as having only one Aboriginal child enrolled. Two kindergartens (both SCF), namely Swan Hill (Shire) with 15 and Rodney (Mooroopna) with 17 had substantial numbers of Aboriginal children. It is interesting that both of the kindergartens with relatively large numbers of Aborigines were in country areas, while the claim in the Booklet "Aboriginals in Victoria" (9) is that the "majority [of Aborigines] live in the Melbourne metropolitan area ...". Branch figures for 1978 and 1979 showed little variation around the total of 112 Aborigines enrolled in 1980, suggesting little change in numbers in recent years.

Aims and Orientation of the Programs, Curriculum etc.

The typical kindergarten program in Victoria is sessional in nature, with kindergartens running at least 8 sessions per week with two groups of children, 25 per group. The Pre-school Child Development Branch had no official information on the curriculum in individual programs. It was suggested that programs for Aboriginal children would differ little from those for other children, which are mainly "traditional" type programs. The responsibility for the approval of the curriculum and overseeing the conduct of the kindergarten program falls to Advisory staff of the Pre-school Child Development Branch. Some information on programs is available for the centres run by S.C.F. (see Chapter 12 on SCF).

Aboriginal Pre-school Assistants' Scheme

Annual Reports of the Pre-school Child Development Branch over the years 1978-1980 refer to the "Aboriginal Project". This is a program for the funding of Aboriginal Assistants in Pre-schools as additional staff. It was a program initiated by the Victorian State Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs which was subsequently taken over by D.A.A.. The Pre-school Child Development Branch Annual Report 1977-1978 said of the "Aboriginal Project":

> In June, 1977, funds provided by the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs covered the salaries of 35 untrained Aboriginal assistants, and Awards to reimburse fees paid for attendance of Aboriginal children at subsidised pre-school centres. (10)

The latter Awards covered 76 children in 1977.

The changes in the "Aboriginal Project" are documented in the next two Annual Reports of the Pre-school Child Development Branch, where it was noted that the salaries of 33 untrained assistants were covered in 1978/79 and in 1979/80. At present (August, 1981) there are 31 assistants being funded by D.A.A.. At the end of 1978 the awards to cover fees for Aboriginal children attending kindergartens were discontinued due mainly to the introduction of a Victorian Government policy that "No child shall be excluded because of the inability of the parents to meet any fee or charge levied by the organisation". (11) Another important change came late in 1979 when

> a new concept was introduced when an assistant was appointed with the understanding that she would be released from kindergarten for some sessions to work with children and parents in other ways. The aim of this was to introduce the parents to the idea of kindergarten attendance for their children and to offer the children play opportunities. Since then three other similar appointments have been made, and each assistant is developing a program appropriate to the Aboriginal families in the particular area. (12)

This move was prompted partly by the need for efforts to obtain greater participation by Aboriginal families in kindergartens. Employing Aboriginal Assistants in this way is now a general feature of the "Aboriginal Project". The Assistants conduct different programs according to the needs of the area, e.g. they may encourage and work with playgroups or visit children at home. Their general aim is "to promote pre-school education in Aboriginal Communities and encourage the children to regularly attend Kindergarten". (13)

Another early change in the "Aboriginal Project" has come in terms of the place of appointment of the Aboriginal Assistant. Originally, the Assistant was appointed to a kindergarten where Aboriginal children were enrolled. However,

> it became ridiculous to specify that assistants could only be employed where Aboriginal children were enrolled, because this would have meant dismissing an assistant if the child left the kindergarten (for school, to live elsewhere etc.).

Thus, there is no longer a rigid requirement that the Aboriginal Assistant be appointed to kindergartens containing Aboriginal children. (14) This is consistent with a belief that the benefits of the scheme fall as much to the Aboriginal Assistants themselves and the Aboriginal Community as to the Aboriginal children in the kindergartens. In a statement on "Aboriginal Pre-school Assistants in Victoria" (15) Margaret Walpole supports these observations, saying

> These appointments provide the person employed with status in their own community as well as status and acceptance of their position by the non-Aboriginal parents of children attending the kindergarten ... The experience gained in the work gives the applicants a sense of confidence and increases their awareness of child development and behaviour.

The Aboriginal Assistants employed, in the same way as for other kindergarten assistants, are untrained. They receive "on the job" training which would include in-service work arranged by Pre-school Advisers in the same way as for other teachers and assistants. The Pre-school Child Development Branch of the Health Commission conducted a one-day seminar in 1980, as already noted. There does not appear to by any specially devised tertiary courses for Aborigines wishing to train as early childhood teachers, assistants, child care workers etc. (although there are courses available with normal entry). It was mentioned, however, that Gordon College had set aside two of its fifteen places for Aborigines in its two year Mother Craft Course. In an unsigned note March 1981, (16) entitled "Notes re Aboriginal Pre-school Education in Victoria" it was mentioned that

> two Aboriginal students entered the Institute of Early Child Development in 1979 to train in early childhood. They have made satisfactory progress and are now in their third and

final year. I.E.C.D. accepts Aboriginal students under special entry conditions.

Apparently I.E.C.D. has had difficulty getting Aborigines to enrol. Training is important, however, because without qualified staff, Aboriginal communities in Victoria would find it very difficult to conduct their own pre-school facility in an autonomous fashion.

RECENT ABORIGINAL INITIATIVES

There are three recent developments in Victoria that have arisen from Aboriginal initiatives to obtain services under their control which can be run to suit the needs of the Aboriginal community. These are the Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Yappera Child Care Centre and Rumbalara Child Care Centre.

The Aboriginal Child Care Agency: The Aboriginal Child Care Agency was established in February, 1976. Similar agencies have since been opened in other capital cities of Australia. They are described below in the chapter on Aboriginal children in child care.

Yappera and Rumbalara Child Care Centres: In her paper to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference, 1981, Esme Halden was critical of both S.C.F. programs for Aboriginal children and the Aboriginal Pre-school Assistants' Schemes because "neither scheme makes mention of Aboriginal culture. They are both schemes which have operated on an assimilationist policy ...". (17) She goes on to describe two Aboriginal programs established in 1981, Yappera (in Fitzroy, Melbourne) and Rumbalara (in the Goulburn Valley). Both centres conduct or plan to conduct pre-school educational programs but in addition provide other services, e.g. Yappera provides full day care facilities and a support function for children and families at risk. Rumbalara aims, for example, to "provide temporary respite for parents suffering from day to day societal pressures", provides occasional care whenever needed and acts as a referral agency. Probably the key feature of both centres is their emphasis on Aboriginality. This is stated in the aims of Yappera as "To develop and maintain Aboriginality as a key to meeting the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal members" and Rumbalara aims "to provide child and family care for young Aboriginal children in an Aboriginalised environment".

PARTICIPATION RATES

As for other States, there seems to be no official statistics available on overall participation rates for Aboriginal children in Victoria. The total of 112 children enrolled, however, should be compared with the estimate of 180 pre-school age (i.e. eligible for kindergarten) Aboriginal children in Victoria by the Aboriginal

Education Services section of the Victorian Education Department. (18) This estimate of 180 is well below the figure of 377 four-year-old Aboriginal children obtained in the 1976 census. There seemed to be some agreement in Victoria that only 50-60 percent of Aboriginal children are enrolled in pre-school facilities, with the proportion much lower in some areas. It was mentioned, for example, that there were several areas in Gippsland where it was known there were many Aboriginal children, but they didn't use pre-school facilities.

STAFFING

Typically, kindergartens in Victoria are staffed by one trained white teacher and one untrained white assistant. The Aboriginal Assistants' Scheme, as noted, provides an extra 31 Aboriginal assistants as additional staff.

The Pre-school Child Development Branch had 33 Advisers in 1979, 26 located in Regions and 7 based in the Central Office. As part of its Advisory function, in June 1980, the Pre-school Child Development Branch conducted a full-day seminar about Aboriginal culture and education for kindergarten teachers and assistants. (19) As well, local Advisers may take initiatives in training teachers or assistants in their region.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ISSUES

As already noted, Esme Halden in her N.A.E.C. Conference Paper, 1981, (20) was critical of the Aboriginal Assistants' Scheme for its failure to Aboriginalise Pre-school education. Bourke (21) also takes up the question of the role of Aboriginal assistants. Clearly, there are variations from kindergarten to kindergarten in the precise role of an Aboriginal assistant. However, Bourke lists three main types of duties:

(a) non-interacting duties, e.g. mixing paints, cleaning up.

(b) interacting with children in the sense of supervision of play, reading stories, and

(c) school-community liaison.

Most of the aide's time, he says, has "been spent on duties requiring little skill". He goes on to make his main point, that "It is essential that the role of Aboriginal auxiliary staff in education should be put into perspective by the examination of the overall goals in Aboriginal education in this State". These goals he notes are:

(a) an aim "to promote a common feeling of Aboriginality among all the descendents of the indigenous people of Australia ...".

He suggests teacher assistants need to be trained accordingly. The second goal:

(b) is that education programs offered to Aboriginal people "undergo a process of Aboriginalisation".

This would require Aboriginal people to be employed at all levels of the Education process. "Large scale training, understudy, and promotion of programs should follow. This Aboriginalisation will also extend to curriculum content, educational philosophy, and research in Aboriginal education by Aborigines". He is critical of the "lack of permanency, training and promotional opportunities for Aboriginal school personnel, seeing them employed in 'dead end' situations 'so long as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs makes available'". He believes the employment of Aboriginal assistants has done little to change curriculum content, so that Aboriginal education is not being conducted "in harmony with Aboriginal cultural values and identity". Part of the blame he lays at the way Aboriginal Assistants are selected, which at the moment is mainly the responsibility of white authorities. He argues that the Aboriginal community should "select the person most suited to aid the education of their children". He believes that "most teacher-aides do not appear to understand the needs of their own community". His recommendations focus on the need for better training of Aboriginal staff and a change in their role and status, so that they become "Aboriginal educators" responsible for the Aboriginal education in their school, and eventually fill the role of community educators for the Aboriginal community. As well he recommends that Assistants only be appointed to schools where Aboriginal children are enrolled, a necessity if they are to fulfil the role he outlines.

Some of Mr. Bourke's points are supported by others. Margaret Walpole (22) also mentions selection of Assistants as an issue. She says selection must be done carefully to obtain a person suited to the work and who can act as an advocate of their commuunity. She also mentions that Aboriginal Assistants tend to be shy at first and take "longer than other assistants to develop in the work". Many factors may contribute to this early reticence (e.g. their perceived status) but the comment does suggest that initial training would be helpful.

Some experience of Aboriginal Teacher Aides in schools has been described by Lillian Tamaru (23). Her experiences are also relevant to the kindergarten situation. It shows the responsibility that can be placed on Aboriginal Assistants for the transmission and support of Aboriginal culture within the school and community. Thus, many Aides or Assistants are attempting to fulfil the role of "Aboriginal Educator" as outlined by Mr. Bourke but without the training, formal recognition or appropriate back-up services and support and against the difficulty of being formally appointed as a Teacher Aide.

Apart from issues associated with the Aboriginal Assistants' Scheme, another main area of concern in Victoria dealt with the relatively low participation rates by Aboriginal children. Two developments seem to be attempting to increase participation levels. The first is the use of Aboriginal Assistants to liaise with Aboriginal families. The second is Aboriginal initiatives of the kind that led to the formation of the child care services described above.

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SUMMARY TABLE: VICTORIA

Administration	Aboriginal children generally are not singled out for special provisions and are expected to participate in existing pre-school facilities for 4-year-olds provided by the main organisation concerned: the Pre-school Child Development Branch of the Health Commission of Victoria. Virtually no Aboriginal children are involved in standard Day Care, nor does the State Department of Education have any responsibility for Aboriginal children below the age of 5 years.
Funding	Commonwealth grants (via the OCC) and State funds are distributed by the Pre-school Child Development Branch to local groups and organisations responsible for pre-schools.
Aims and Philosophies	Aboriginal children generally participate in half-day programs of a conventional nature, with little adaptation of the curriculum.
Enrolments	In July 1980 there were 112 Aboriginal children attending 39 different pre-schools, predominantly in country regions (despite the high proportion of Aborigines living in the Melbourne metropolitan area).
Participation Rates	There is some agreement that between 50 and 60% of eligible Aboriginal children are enrolled in pre-school activities.
Staffing	Most pre-schools are staffed by a trained white teacher and one untrained white assistant. However, an Aboriginal Assistants' Scheme funded by the Commonwealth (via DAA) has provided in recent years between 30 and 35 untrained Aboriginal people as additional staff, generally in pre-schools attended by Aboriginal children.
Independent Programs	Three child care agencies have been established as a result of recent Aboriginal initiatives. All three are community based organisations controlled by Aborigines for the care and welfare of Aboriginal children of all ages. One agency is funded directly by the Commonwealth (via the OCC). All three provide services at the early childhood level.

CHAPTER 7

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

The situation in the Northern Territory is considerably more complex than elsewhere in Australia:

(1) Geographically it is a very isolated region with vast environmental and climatic variation ranging from tropical coastal regions to harsh inland deserts. It is sparsely settled, with an average population density of one person to thirteen square kilometres.

(2) Demographically, the Aboriginal people comprise a much higher proportion of the population. The 1976 census indicated that 25,673 Aborigines constituted some 24.5 percent of the total population of the Northern Territory, compared with less than 2 percent for Australia as a whole. Included in these population figures are members of Aboriginal communities living nearly fully in a traditional way on their own land, members of fringe dwelling communities living in extreme poverty around the urban centres, Aboriginal people living as completely integrated members of urban communities, and the residents of large Aboriginal communities located well away from the major centres.

(3) Politically, the Northern Territory does not enjoy full statehood, although during the past decade it has moved towards increasing self-government. Previously the region was administered by the federal government, with effective political control exercised from Canberra, some 3,000 kilometres away.

In view of these relatively unique characteristics it seems advisable to review in greater detail the history of pre-school services for Northern Territory Aboriginal children. Current policies and practices cannot fully be understood without reference to a wider historical perspective that highlights some of the conflicts and confusion that arose during their formulation.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

There are two separate strands in the development of pre-school services for Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory. First, pre-school facilities were developed in urban areas, predominantly for non-Aboriginal children. Gradually, however, with the slow drift of Aboriginal people to fringe camps, the proportion of Aboriginal children attending these pre-schools increased, especially in Alice Springs, Katherine and Batchelor. Secondly, pre-school facilities were provided in Aboriginal communities as part of planned programs of social change. While these strands often overlapped and shared some characteristics in common, they have differed substantially. In fact.

although on paper at least the two strands have appeared identical since 1973, the differences are still maintained in areas such as staffing structures, funding, administrative authorities, objectives and content.

The development of pre-schools in Aboriginal communities is of particular interest to this report, in that it constitutes one of the earliest and most sustained attempts to develop a pre-school system designed specifically for Aboriginal children, and designed to meet specific social policy goals of the administering authority.

The development of the two strands will be described separately, until the amalgamation of the two systems in 1973.

COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOLS IN URBAN CENTRES: 1947-1973 (1)

The pre-school movement began in the Northern Territory (N.T.) in 1947, when a group of Alice Springs residents established a kindergarten in the C.W.A.* buildings, under the general guidance of Nathalie Gorey, after whom the kindergarten was named. Two further centres were established in Darwin shortly after this. In 1954 responsibility for kindergartens, which had been held by the Education Department, was taken over by the Welfare Branch of the N.T. Administration. While this might suggest that kindergartens were viewed as "welfare" rather than "educational" facilities, there is little evidence that the kindergartens were significantly influenced in their actual operations by any such considerations. It is perhaps appropriate to note that the Welfare Branch was also responsible for the development of pre-schools for Aboriginal children on the settlements. However, again there seems to have been little direct consequence from this common authority structure. At the time of the transfer of authority five centres were operating in urban communities, three government funded and two non-funded centres.

A Pre-School Advisory Board was established in 1954 to undertake a general advisory and supervisory role, although local voluntary committees retained a great deal of autonomy. In 1955 a pre-school supervisor was appointed to the Welfare Branch to provide professional guidance and advice. However, in 1958 the Board was dissolved and replaced by the N.T. Pre-School Association, an autonomous body acting as the N.T. Branch of the Australian Pre-School Association. This development served to tie the development of the urban pre-schools closely to developments elsewhere in Australia, confirming the differential development of the urban and Aboriginal programs. In 1959 the Association took over responsibility for the appointment of staff to all but one of the urban pre-schools, a responsibility previously held by the local committees. However, the Welfare Branch continued to provide the administrative and funding responsibility for the pre-schools. By 1960 a total of 13 centres was operating in urban or European communities throughout the Territory: 11 government funded centres (six in Darwin, two in Alice Springs and one each in Batchelor,

* Country Women's Association

Katherine and Tennant Creek), one partially funded Church centre in Alice Springs and one independent centre at Peko Mine, near Tennant Creek.

In 1964 the Welfare Branch established a Pre-school Standards Committee which took over the role of the N.T. Pre-School Association, with responsibility for the provision of funding (capital works, staff salaries, maintainance, etc.) remaining with the Welfare Branch, but with local committees being responsible for inicial material costs ($500), some maintainance and movable equipment costs, and the provision of "mother help".

In March 1968 administrative responsibilities changed again, from the Welfare Branch to the Department of Education and Science, although the Welfare Branch retained responsibility for pre-schools in Aboriginal communities. The Department of Education and Science retained this responsibility until 1973, when the Commonwealth Department of Education (NT Division) took over responsibility for all education in the Northern Territory, including pre-school education in urban communities and on Aboriginal settlements. This change of responsibility heralded a number of far-reaching changes in pre-school education in the N.T., including the combining of all education into a single system, and the formal incorporation of pre-schools into the school system. These developments are described in greater detail below.

In the 26 years from the establishment of the first community pre-school in Alice Springs, the pre-school movement experienced eight changes in administrative arrangements. Despite these changes, and perhaps because of the continuity of the local voluntary committees and the continuing connections with the Australian Pre-School Association, the movement retained a continuity of development, of philosophy and of methodology. The development in the N.T. compares very favourably with that in the other States. As reported in 1969 (2), 42.5 percent of eligible children in the N.T. were enrolled at kindergartens. While this figure includes both community and Aboriginal pre-schools, it compares favourably with the A.C.T. (48.8 percent) and stands in stark contrast to some other States (e.g. Queensland, 8.6 percent; Western Australia, 10.0 percent and New South Wales, 2.8 percent).

This community kindergarten system, developed to meet the needs of urban, non-Aboriginal children, evolved relatively independently of the Aboriginal pre-schools on the settlements. However, there was one area of potential overlap. In 1956 pre-schools in some areas of Darwin and Alice Springs were subsidised to allow the enrolment of Aboriginal children, and by 1960 this had been extended to Tennant Creek and Batchelor. Thus small numbers of Aborigines were participating in some of the urban programs.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES: 1954-1973

The establishment of pre-schools on Aboriginal settlements in the Northern Territory provides one of the few examples of a pre-school system designed exclusively for Aboriginal children, and developed as an integral part of an on-going social and education program. These wider programs, however, were based on assimilationist policies that viewed the settlements as temporary institutions within which the Aborigines would acquire appropriate skills and values, thus enabling them to move more readily into Australian society. In administering these programs the Welfare Branch of the N.T. Administration saw its role as one of replacing Aboriginal culture with white culture as rapidly as possible, in order to submerge Aborigines in white society. This policy ignored the opposition of Aborigines to such a process, and in so doing ensured the failure of both the Welfare Branch and the Aboriginal programs, producing the social chaos and dependence which characterised the settlements at the end of this period. (3)

The first pre-school specifically for Aboriginal children was established at Bungalow, near Alice Springs, in 1954, as a "buffer" class for children prior to entering school. Subsequent developments were spasmodic, with new pre-schools at Warrabri (1959), Yuendumu (1959) and Papunya (1961) operating irregularly due to difficulties in obtaining appropriately trained teaching staff. These facilities functioned under the direct control of the Welfare Branch, thus being subject to centralised direction without the ameliorating effects of the local voluntary committees which influenced the community pre-schools. The emerging objectives of the early programs were described by Gilbert in the following terms:

> It is accepted that an effective weapon in achieving the aim of assimilation is the training from an early age of Aboriginal children in our social folk ways, customs and habits. The use of this method of training, however, is not without its problems, particularly when we bear in mind that this present generation of children at least must find itself living between two cultures. By and large, the native children will still be living with their families in the native camps, and whilst attempts are being continuously made to improve the standard of living and hygiene in their camps (the aim being to transmute the old camps into village communities) the environment in which they live will continue for a long time yet to contain features which are considerably at variance with (some may even be repugnant to) the goals and objects of the training which they will begin to receive at pre-school centres. (4)

In achieving these goals, Gilbert noted:

> Of necessity, emphasis has been given to the teaching of acceptable social habits, oral English and acceptance of and by the group. Special attention has been paid to training in

personal hygiene. (5)

These goals were further emphasised by H.C. Giese, the Director of the Welfare Branch, in December 1961:

> While this training from an early age in our social patterns is an accepted tool in achieving the aim of assimilation, it does have its problems - particularly when we remember that this generation of children will find itself living between two cultures. These children must be helped to retain a respect for both and, at the same time, a desire to embrace our culture. (6)

The Watts-Gallacher report of 1964 served as a major catalyst in the development of Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory, including pre-school education. The bulk of its recommendations saw the Aboriginal education system as a modified State school system - modified in terms of teaching materials and techniques, but retaining the basic structure, organisation and goals of education systems throughout the rest of Australia. The report envisaged extended pre-school services, streaming in later grades, leading either to transitional high schools or trade training, the development of remedial techniques for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and an emphasis on teaching English. While the report regularly commented on the cultural differences between Aboriginal and European children, the suggestions for coping with these differences were phrased in terms of how the differences might be overcome, rather than how they might be encouraged.

The Watts-Gallacher report made some specific recommendations for the development of Pre-school programs:

(a) that Pre-schools be established as soon as possible on all settlements and missions;

(b) that action research programs be instituted in Aboriginal Pre-schools with a view to evolving programs appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal pre-school children;

(c) that use be made of the present available buildings for Pre-schools but that every endeavour be made to erect suitable buildings which can be equipped and furnished to meet the needs of Aboriginal Pre-school education;

(d) that, in view of the difficulties in recruiting trained Pre-school teachers, suitable trained teachers be appointed to these positions, but that there be continuing efforts to recruit trained Pre-school teachers;

(e) that the Supervisor, Pre-school Education (Aboriginal Pre-schools) provide the necessary special training for the teachers and direct action research in the Pre-schools. (7)

In essence the report, which served as an influential guideline for subsequent educational developments, was phrased in assimilationist terminology and was developed within the then current deprivation/intervention framework. It did recommend, however, the inclusion of traditional material, including the teaching of Aboriginal art and craft, music, literature and dance in the school, with adult members of the community being involved.

From about the mid 1960s there was a rapid development of pre-schools. By 1970 a total of 24 Aboriginal pre-schools was operating, with 816 Aboriginal children attending. With approximately 3,300 Aboriginal children aged 0-5 years resident on government settlements and missions, this suggests that a very high proportion of 3-4 year olds were enrolled in pre-schools. (8) The primary objective of these schools was spelled out in 1969 by J. Gallacher, then Inspector of Special Schools for the N.T. and one of the authors of the Watts-Gallacher report, when he described it as a "program of rapid change from one culture to another". (9)

By 1973, prior to the amalgamation of the two education systems, the number of pre-schools had risen to 35, with a total enrolment of 975 children. During this period they continued to operate within the general framework of the Watts-Gallacher report. They were concerned principally with the preparation of Aboriginal children for entry to schools, concentrating on:

- pre-English skills
- classroom behaviours
- personal hygiene
- pre-number activities.

The Welfare Branch experienced considerable difficulty throughout this period in obtaining qualified pre-school teachers, and regularly used primary trained teachers in kindergartens, even though provision was made for special scholarships to train teachers for work in Aboriginal schools.

Aboriginal aides were employed in pre-schools, usually on the basis of one aide for each trained teacher. In general, they had little influence on the establishment of policy or curriculum, performing a variety of teaching, administrative and support tasks under the direct guidance of the teacher.

AMALGAMATION: THE PERIOD SINCE 1973

In 1973 the two school systems were amalgamated into a single structure under the authority of the Commonwealth Department of Education (Northern Territory Division). This administrative change, which resulted directly from the election of the Federal Labor Government, was part of some major changes in education in the N.T.

Basic to these changes were: (1) the replacement of the assimilation policy with the new "self-determination" policy, (2) a major restructuring of the administration of Aborigines in the Northern Territory, and (3) greatly increased levels of local autonomy.

These changes had a number of effects on pre-schools in the N.T.:

(1) Pre-schools were, from 1975, integrated into Primary schools.

(2) Bilingual programs were introduced into many Aboriginal schools, with important implications for pre-school programs.

(3) There was an increased emphasis on community involvement and on the use of Aboriginal teachers.

(4) The goals of Aboriginal education received some major rethinking. Nobody was quite sure what form Aboriginal education should take under a policy of self-determination.

These changes did not occur overnight, nor did they occur without considerable stress throughout the Aboriginal school system. While this stress was expressed differently at different levels in the school system, some specific problems arose in pre-school education. Pre-school staff, accustomed to years of autonomy, and perceiving their task as rather different from that of primary schools, felt threatened by some of these changes. At the same time school principals, with little training or experience in pre-school matters, suddenly found themselves responsible for these institutions. However, a modus operandi was established which allowed for:

(1) Pre-schools making decisions on the enrolment of pupils.

(2) Pre-school committees (in urban areas) being maintained as semi-autonomous groups, with representation on school councils.

(3) Principals recognising the special equipment needs of pre-schools.

(4) Pre-school staff attending all staff meetings.

(5) Nine contact sessions being held each week, three-and-a-half hour morning sessions and two-and-a-half hour afternoon sessions.

Despite the amalgamation of the two pre-school systems, some differences were continued; pre-schools in the urban centres were not fully funded (although the level of funding continued to increase) while Aboriginal pre-schools were fully funded; the local committees continued to be influential in the urban situation, but never developed in the Aboriginal pre-schools; and finally, the intent of the Aboriginal pre-schools remained more directly oriented towards school preparation than was the case in the urban pre-schools.

This period saw a continued growth in the number of pre-school centres operating and the number of children enrolled. By 1976, 66 centres were operating with 90 teachers, 62 Aboriginal aides and 41 non-Aboriginal aides. However, these figures refer only to schools with separate pre-school facilities. Many smaller schools also enrolled pre-school children, and if these schools are included, a total of 85 schools in the N.T. were operating pre-school programs, with 2,895 children enrolled. (10)

This period is perhaps best described as a period of consolidation of the mechanics of the pre-school system, without any major innovations in aims or practices. This was probably inevitable. Aboriginal schools during this period were undergoing major changes which did not begin to stabilise until near the end of this period. These changes reflected a number of changes within the Aboriginal communities:

(1) Major structural re-organisation on many settlements.

(2) Increased demands for autonomy and Aboriginal identity.

(3) The emergence of the out-station (or homeland centre) movement.

(4) Land rights.

Schools were forced to undertake some major restructuring to allow for these changes, including:

(1) decentralised out-station schools;

(2) bilingual porgrams;

(3) increasing control by Aboriginal communities;

(4) a re-orientation of curriculum content and strategies;

(5) a far higher level of professional involvement of Aboriginal people.

The pre-schools were only marginally involved in these changes and, with little clear sense of direction, concentrated instead on solving more fundamental problems, such as funding, staffing and age of entry of children. The general characteristics of pre-schools, particularly those on Aboriginal settlements, over this period included:

(1) a serious lack of qualified, experienced and stable staff;

(2) a shortage of staff for advisory and development work in central offices;

(3) the overriding problems of coping on a daily basis with the heavy demands of living in, and operating pre-schools in Aboriginal communities;

(4) the difficulties experienced in establishing clear aims for pre-schools in a context in which both the communities and the schools were in a state of flux;

(5) within the constraints, the development of a general philosophy for pre-schools.

CONCLUSION

During the period 1947-1980 pre-school education for Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory was provided on a scale not seen elsewhere in Australia and with clear and definite goals not established elsewhere. By the end of this period pre-school education was available to most, if not all, Aboriginal children in the N.T., and to a very high proportion of non-Aboriginal children. This was a very substantial achievement.

However, the policies and practices adopted during the bulk of this period, which substantially reflected the goals of the 1960s, are currently being reassessed by those concerned with the future development of pre-schools. The policies adopted were a mixture of three influences:

(1) traditional kindergarten philosophies and programs;

(2) emphasis on the importance of pre-schools as part of the assimilation program; and

(3) occasional comments on the need to make concessions towards Aboriginal culture.

These influences were emphasised through a dependence on external advice, on a centralised authority structure, and on the use of models of child development and criteria for success drawn from western theoretical structures.

The first 20 years or so, then, while producing a widespread kindergarten system, did not produce any major developments in theory or practice in Aboriginal pre-schooling. The lessons to be learned from this historical period provide a valuable base for future developments in Aboriginal pre-schooling. The experience of the N.T.

suggests that:

(1) pre-schooling provides no magical solutions to problems of school failure, particularly programs based on western models of education;

(2) assimilationist policies do not provide an appropriate framework for the development of a pre-school program;

(3) pre-schools should not tie their aims and objectives too closely to subsequent schooling;

(4) the dominance of non-Aboriginal personnel raises serious questions about: local control and involvement; enrichment of the child's first language; use of traditional styles of teaching and learning; and the creation of effective learning environments.

On a more positive note, many of these lessons have been learned by those involved in pre-school education in the N.T. With the demise of direct Commonwealth control and the establishment of a separate N.T. Department of Education in 1978 those responsible for Aboriginal education in the N.T. have responded positively to their newly earned autonomy, and are developing some exciting and innovative early childhood programs.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Having placed the early education of Aboriginal children in its wider historical perspective, we can now turn to a more detailed analysis of the contemporary situation in the Northern Territory. The early childhood services currently available can be grouped into one of three categories based on funding and administrative arrangements:

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

All pre-schools in the N.T. (with the exception of one recent Church-based group in Darwin) operate under the administrative authority of the N.T. Education Department, and are attached (if somewhat loosely at times) to schools. However, this is not a monolithic structure, and six distinguishable types of school or community can be considered as separate categories:

(1) large Aboriginal community schools (e.g. Yuendumu, Bamyili, Maningrida);

(2) out-station schools;

(3) small (1-2 teacher) schools, often on stations;

(4) fringe camp communities;

(5) urban schools;

(6) mission schools.

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Day Care, Family Day Care, and various community development programs operate under the authority of the N.T. Department of Community Development. The bulk of these programs are administered by the Division of Community Welfare within the Department (see chapter on Day Care Services).

INDEPENDENT PROGRAMS

A small number of independent programs are also operating within the N.T. These are usually Aboriginal based.

The following review provides a detailed analysis of current services, each of the above categories being considered separately.

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

OVERVIEW

All pre-schools in the N.T. are part of the N.T. Education Department and are formally attached to N.T. schools. The pre-schools are the responsibility of the school principals who are responsible, through Regional Superintendents, to the Director and ultimately the Minister. Pre-school advisers are located in the major urban centres, and visit schools within their regions, while curriculum development work is undertaken through the Professional Services Branch of the Department in Darwin. The Department provides pre-schools for children aged 3-5 years, although the bulk of enrolments are children aged 4-5 years, and where there is pressure on places, 4 year olds are given preference.

Funding

Pre-schools are funded within the N.T. Education Department funding structures. The funding arrangements for the N.T. are set out in the 1980-1981 Budget Paper (11) and include specific pre-school education grants from the Commonwealth (Children's Services Program) of $340,000 in addition to the normal General Revenue Funds.

Individual pre-schools are funded within the general funding for the schools to which they are attached.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

At August 1981, there were 3,147 pre-school enrolments in Education Department schools in the N.T. (12) Of these, 1,194 were listed as Aborigines. Data from 1980 showed almost the same number of pre-school enrolments (3,121) and they were distributed across regions as shown in Table 2. Table 2 also gives numbers of pre-school teachers.

TABLE 2

Distribution of Pre-school Enrolments and Pre-school Teachers by Region, July 1980 (13)

School type & location		Number of Pre-schools	Enrolments	F.T.E. (1) Teachers
Region	Type			
Darwin	Urban	20	1245	41
Alice Springs	Urban	5	386	11
Katherine	Urban	2	126	4
Tennant Creek	Urban	2	101	3
Nthn. Dir.	Pred. Eur. (4)	6	226	8
Sthn. Dir.	Pred. Eur. (4)	1	14	1
Nthn. Dir.	Aboriginal (2)	16	615	16.9
Sthn. Dir.	Aboriginal (2)	7	257	8.9
Nthn. Dir.	Mission (3)	3	79	4
Sthn. Dir.	Mission (3)	1	72	1

(1) Full time equivalent pre-school teachers.
(2) Many Aboriginal schools have pre-school children enrolled, but do not have a separate pre-school teacher. Some of these schools have a fraction of their F.T.E.T. level allocated to pre-school teaching.
(3) Includes Hermannsburg and Santa Teresa. Hermannsburg has 38 pre-school children, but does not record having a pre-school teacher.
(4) Includes predominantly European communities outside the four main urban centres.

It can be seen from Table 2 that most of the Aboriginal pre-school enrolments are in the Northern Directorate Aboriginal and the Southern Directorate Aboriginal. This is further illustrated in Table 3 where a more detailed breakdown of enrolments is given. Table 3 also gives school enrolments for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children from ages 3-6. It can be seen that almost all the under 3 year olds enrolled are Aboriginal and that the only age group where there are more Aborigines than non-Aborigines is age 3.

TABLE 3

School Enrolments: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Children, August 1981.

School type and Location		Pre-school Enrolments				School enrolments by age									
				Under 3		3		4		5		6			
Region	Type	Ab.	N.Ab.	A.	N.Ab.	A.	N.Ab.	A.	N.Ab.	A.	N.Ab.	A.	N.Ab.		
Darwin	Urban	119	1185	-	-	18	96	84	1056	66	790	87	920		
Alice Springs	Urban	61	314	-	-	7	48	56	297	22	194	37	216		
Katherine	Urban	58	74	7	-	24	10	22	81	16	58	27	80		
Tennant Creek	Urban	12	94	-	-	2	3	8	65	8	91	10	89		
All other	Predom. European	21	225	-	-	8	10	12	103	20	209	24	222		
Independent		-	-	-	-	-	-	5	100	20	243	22	297		
TOTAL	URBAN	271	1892	7	-	59	167	187	1702	152	1585	207	1824		
Northern Directorate	Aboriginal	559	45	13	1	132	15	278	27	317	17	319	20		
Southern Directorate	Aboriginal	538	14	6	-	31	4	128	11	153	13	167	10		
	Mission	126	7	-	-	11	1	82	7	118	9	95	4		
TOTAL	NON-URBAN	923	66	19	1	174	20	488	45	588	39	581	34		
TOTAL	NORTHERN TERRITORY	1194	1953	26	1	233	187	675	1747	740	1624	783	1858		

Aboriginal pre-school enrolments can be broken down further according to the varying contexts in which schooling is taking place. Three such contexts can be identified:

(i) Urban centres: Aboriginal families here may be living in integrated settings with the European population, living in fringe camps in or near the urban area, or be temporarily resident in transitional settings. A total of 271 Aboriginal children (22.7 percent of the total number of Aboriginal pre-school enrolments) were found in 1981 in urban pre-schools.

(ii) Non-urban contexts: In 1981 there were 797 Aboriginal children (66.75 percent) enrolled in non-urban, predominantly Aboriginal communities. This includes children from Aboriginal townships, stations, and homeland centres.

(iii) Missions. The 1981 data show that 126 Aboriginal pre-school children (10.55 percent) were enrolled in mission schools. The mission context is to be described subsequently, but the following gives a description of enrolments in the first two types of location, namely "urban/European situations" and "non-urban predominantly Aboriginal communities".

Urban/European Situations

The figure of 22.7 percent of Aboriginal children enrolled in urban/European pre-schools is surprisingly high. A closer examination of the school-based enrolments provides some additional information on this figure. A small number of pre-schools contributes a large proportion (45 percent) of these enrolments (16):

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Bagot Pre-school	35	1
Traeger Park Pre-schools	25	60
Katherine Sth. (includes children enrolled in transitional pre-school group)	48	42
Batchelor	14	6
Total	122	109

That is, these four pre-schools provide 45 percent of all urban Aboriginal enrolments. The remainder are scattered, predominantly throughout pre-schools in the Darwin and Alice Springs areas, where the Aboriginal children are a small minority in the pre-schools.

Non-Urban Predominantly Aboriginal Communities

The decentralisation of Aboriginal communities (the out-station or homeland movement) has created a major challenge for the N.T. Education Department, and made it very difficult indeed to provide any statistical breakdown of the educational provisions in the various communities. The Annual Report of the D.A.A. (N.T. Division) in 1972-73 listed 34 Aboriginal communities in the N.T. (17) The N.T. Department of Community Development, in 1981, published an Index of N.T. Aboriginal Communities, which listed almost 600 Aboriginal communities in the N.T. (18) The proliferation of these communities and their transitional and mobile character have made the compilation of adequate statistics virtually impossible at the moment.

However, it is possible to provide general comments about three distinct kinds of communities, without being able to provide accurate statistical evidence. These are Aboriginal townships, pastoral stations, and out-station or homeland communities.

Aboriginal Townships: There is still a significant number of large Aboriginal communities based on the old welfare settlements. These would include the following (19):

	Population			Total	
	DCD 1981	DAA 1981	Pre-school Enrolments	School Enrolments	Pre-school Teachers
Amoonguna	180	(85)	6	38	-
Angurugu	564	(592)	45	260	1
Areyonga	180	(159)	-	25	-
Bamyili	525	(431)	14	166	1
Beswick	200	(220)	15	76	-
Borroloola	275	(406)	30	123	1
Croker Is.	173	(171)	17	73	1
Daly River	163	(152)			-
Delissaville	200	(112)	9	61	1
Docker River	250	(271)	8	103	-
Elliott	200		26	97	1
Finke	140	(155)	3	33	-
Galiwinku	1101	(1284)			
Gapuwiyuk	215	(250)	-	65	-
Garden Pt.	250	(305)	10	72	1
Goulburn Is.	267	(204)	3	49	-
Haasts Bluff	135	(90)	9	26	1
Hermannsburg	212	(405)	38	259	-
Hooker Creek	806	(715)	30	189	1
Maningrida	380	(462)	33	253	1
Milingimbi	700	(732)	25	336	-
Nguiu	1086	(1084)	41	308	2
Ngukurr	527	(324)	20	125	-
Numbulwar	323	(490)	25	166	1
Oenpelli	510	(431)	33	230	1
Papunya	550		28	189	1
Peppimenarti	250	(243)	-	51	-
Port Keats	800	(984)	22	293	1
Santa Teresa	550	(414)	34	162	1
Snake Bay	300	(221)	15	78	1
Umbakumba	390	(364)	23	118	-
Warrabri	750	(708)	38	229	1
Wave Hill	221		26	92	1
Yirrkala	676	(671)	87	335	1
Yuendumu	1130	(1253)	12	227	1

However, again these figures need to be considered very cautiously. The population figures derived from the D.C.D. Index are in some cases extremely doubtful. Similarly, the figures for enrolments may include some out-station enrolments. For example, the figures for Hermannsburg indicate 212 Aboriginal residents at Hermannsburg and 259 children enrolled at school! The school enrolments here include the 25+ out-stations around Hermannsburg, while the Aboriginal population at Hermannsburg would currently be significantly fewer than the 212 noted. Similar discrepancies can be noted throughout the table, indicating the inadequacy of existing statistical materials (e.g., compare Yuendumu with Yirrkala in relation to the proportion of school enrolments to total population).

However, the general point remains that there are large numbers of Aboriginal people living in predominantly Aboriginal townships throughout the Northern Territory. Indeed, if the D.C.D. figures were taken at face value, some 15,000 Aboriginal people are living in these communities. While this is certainly an over-estimate it does indicate that the out-station movement has not eliminated the large communities.

In addition to Aboriginal townships, many Aboriginal children attend station schools. There are approximately forty 1 to 3 teacher schools operating on pastoral properties throughout the N.T. with enrolments of 8 to 40 children. These schools would not normally have either a pre-school teacher or a pre-school group. The small numbers of pre-school aged children attending these schools would normally be attached to the younger age group of children and would involve themselves in a variety of activities loosely connected with the school activities of the older children.

Lastly, some Aboriginal pre-school children are enrolled in out-station or homeland schools, although numbers are difficult to determine. Indeed, the system of out-station schools can still be described as highly innovative and experimental, and is still in a state of development. (20) The general characteristics of out-station schools involve:

(1) an Aboriginal person from the homeland community accepting responsibility for provision of the program;

(2) non-Aboriginal teachers from central schools on larger communities acting as resource personnel and visiting the school perhaps once or twice a week;

(3) a program operating for relatively few hours per week with a small number of children but with a large age range;

(4) pre-school aged children are more likely to remain in the community than attend the school. Those who do attend the school do not receive anything like a pre-school program;

(5) there are serious reservations about the need for and the appropriateness or desirability of pre-school programs on the out-stations. The community structures and the nature of schooling in these communities renders pre-schools largely irrelevant.

Aims and Orientation of the Programs

The aims and philosophies of pre-school education in Northern Territory schools are currently undergoing major re-assessment with the Northern Territory Education Department. As schools for Aboriginal children have changed, and as the demands for increased Aboriginal involvement in schools have continued to grow, the nature of pre-school programs has recently responded to these demands.

The most recent documentation of aims and philosophies is contained in a handbook prepared for Aboriginal early childhood teachers in the Northern Territory by Beth Graham, a Senior Advisor with the Education Department. The following summary highlights the major features, drawing heavily on Appendices 1 and 2 of the handbook (21):

(1) Role of Aboriginal teachers The handbook recognises that meaningful early education experiences for Aboriginal children can only be provided by Aboriginal adults. It documents the specific tasks of Aboriginal teachers as:

(i) to be involved and involve others in rethinking their community's approach to early childhood education;

(ii) to assume almost total responsibility for face-to-face contact with children;

(iii) to share the responsibility in developing curriculum content for their program; and

(iv) to discover and implement ways of communicating with adults in the community so that parental involvement can become a reality.

(2) Role of Aboriginal parents and relatives The handbook stresses that parents should be full participants in the early education of their children. Their role is to incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and learning styles in the planning and implementation of programs. They also can help to enrich the children's language by talking and listening to them, and by talking and listening to other adults in their presence.

(3) Role of non-Aboriginal teachers The handbook is quite explicit in stating that non-Aborigines will need to dispense with the usual role of 'teacher of children', and instead become facilitators or persons who will help Aboriginal parents and teachers achieve their educational goals, within the present realities of life in their particular community. Aboriginal people have within themselves the resources to achieve the desired development of their children, and it is the task

of the non-Aboriginal teacher to help this happen.

(4) Emphasis on Aboriginal languages Once again a clear statement of rationale is provided: "The enrichment of the child's first language and early concept development through that language should be seen as the dominant theme for early education programs for Aboriginal children". The handbook then goes on to stress that effective development of the first language is vital to successful acquisition of a second language.

(5) Use of Aboriginal learning styles It is recommended that children be allowed to make use of the informal learning style inherent in Aboriginal society as a starting place for their school education. Emphasis should be on learning through sensory experiences, and through observation and imitation. The handbook draws heavily on the work of Stephen Harris (22) in making a number of specific suggestions about the use of traditional learning styles in the pre-school.

(6) Use of local experiences and materials The handbook suggests that the content of planned early learning experiences should be drawn from Aboriginal systems of knowledge, thus allowing the children to continue conceptualising and classifying their world in the way of their parents. Only when children have become consciously aware of their own world view should they be introduced to the concepts and classifications inherent in the 'western' world view.

(7) Importance of self-concept and identity The early years of schooling are seen to play an essential role in the development of a positive self-concept and a strong sense of Aboriginal identity. A positive acceptance of self and culture should provide a secure foundation for all later learning.

These curriculum guidelines are most likely to be implemented in the "Aboriginal Township" schools referred to above, where approximately 67 percent of Aboriginal pre-school enrolments occur. It must be recognised, however, that the precise nature of the program will vary a great deal from one pre-school to another, depending partly on the experience, qualifications, attitudes, etc. of the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal staff involved. Most of the pre-schools in Aboriginal townships are staffed by a non-Aboriginal teacher with one or more Aboriginal assistants. Some programs are actually run by the Aboriginal assistants, with the non-Aboriginal teacher acting as a facilitator, while others are dominated by the teacher. Variations in the role of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff in this way affect the proportion of English and Aboriginal languages used and the extent to which Aboriginal viewpoints are expressed in the program.

The pre-schools in Aboriginal townships offer a full-day program, but most of the activities occur in the morning with afternoons being very unstructured. This is fairly typical of full-day programs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children elsewhere in Australia. Milk and protein biscuits are provided and health workers visit the pre-schools regularly. The trend is towards enrolling Aboriginal children at younger ages in early childhood programs (e.g. at age 3 or before). The degree of involvement of Aboriginal mothers varies considerably. At Yuendumu an Aboriginal mother is responsible for the pre-school program (in fact the first three years of the school program are run by Walbiri staff). Here the level of parental involvement is high, with the pre-school seen as more a child-parent centre than a pre-school. (23)

There seems to be a general pressure from the Northern Territory Education Department to move towards more Aboriginal content and structure in pre-schools, and to shift them out into the camp situation, away from Western spatial, temporal and authority structures. However, in each situation the effectiveness of this pressure depends largely on the quality of the non-Aboriginal staff involved, and the authority held by the Aboriginal staff.

For the children attending station schools the situation is again somewhat different. The programs for pre-school age children could not be described as a serious attempt to provide early education. In fact, the enrolments of pre-school children in these programs is not particularly encouraged. While these children are officially recorded as enrolled in pre-school, they could not be considered as receiving a conventional pre-school program.

The Transition Program It is worth noting the recent development of a "transition" program in Northern Territory schools. While the program has been implemented mostly in urban rather than Aboriginal schools, it is Northern Territory policy for all schools and will therefore extend to Aboriginal schools. The transition program holds implications for early education. The transition program is to operate between Pre-school and Year 1 such that children will "transfer from Pre-school to Transition based on readiness for school and also from Transition to Year 1 based on readiness to undertake the Year 1 program". (24) The Northern Territory Department of Education describes Transition as "a period of time in which the child consolidates and develops those attitudes, skills and concepts which will enable him/her to experience success in the Year 1 program". (25) The Transition program is described as not being of a fixed period for any individual "but one of readiness, i.e. from readiness for school to readiness for undertaking the Year 1 program".

THE N.T. DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The NT Department of Community Development "seeks to promote the well-being of the numerous and varied communities of the Northern Territory by encouraging maximum participation". (26) It has administrative responsibility for such functions as social welfare, consumer affairs, art and cultural affairs, correctional services, ethnic affairs, local government and essential services to Aboriginal communities. The DCD is organised into six divisions, one of which is

"Community Welfare" where early childhood services are to be found. Thus, the Community Welfare Division is responsible for substitute care for children, family homes, adoption, fostering and family services, counselling services, homemaker assistance, day care centre registration, child protection services, neighbourhood centres, among other services. Most of the funds for these programs are supplied by the Commonwealth via the Children's Services Program (see later chapter on day care).

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

Programs that involve substitute care for Aboriginal children are increasingly using extended family networks as an alternative to placement with European families. Similarly, adoptions for Aboriginal children are following a policy of placing children with similar race origin. (27)

The Community Welfare Division also runs the "Homemaker Services Program". The role of the Homemaker is diverse and is similar to the role in other States. They are "neighbourhood persons" who support families experiencing difficulties. They may work with families, individuals or groups and the work extends from helping mothers to cope with infants to the problems of the aged. Many of these Homemakers are Aborigines working in Aboriginal communities. An example of the kind of service provided is given in the DCD Annual Report, 1980, where the service in Tennant Creek is described as follows: (28)

> The Tennant Creek service has developed at a remarkable pace. In the short time in which it has existed (less than 5 months) homemakers have set up school lunch programs, washing and ironing facilities, a pensioner lunch program, and have been a major driving force in the maintainance of bush camps on the periphery of the town. Two play groups now operate in bush camps, and Aboriginal input into the school camp curriculum has resulted in record attendances of Aboriginal children.

While it appears that the Homemaker program has had varying success within Aboriginal communities, it offers one service of all-centralised support to Aboriginal families.

ABORIGINAL INITIATIVES: SOME INDEPENDENT PROGRAMS

A small number of independent Aboriginal based early childhood services are currently operating in the Northern Territory. These programs are relatively recent and have not been well documented. The present report gives relatively brief descriptions of them, based largely on secondary sources. Three of the programs offer day care services as a major aspect of their operation and consequently are covered in the separate chapter on Aboriginal children in day care. These are (a) the Galiwinku Community Child Care Centre, (b) the Kalano Association, Katherine and (c) the Central Australian Aboriginal

Congress Child Care Centre, Alice Springs. In addition to these three independent programs, mention also needs to be made of Yipirinya School.

Yipirinya School (29) Some 1500 Aborigines live in fringe camps around Alice Springs. In the mid-1970s these communities established their own council, Tangentyera Council, as a co-ordinating body to undertake activities on behalf of the communities. The communities and Council perceived existing schools in Alice Springs as alien institutions. Their solution was to set up an alternative: Yipirinya School. The school takes children from 4 to 15 years. All teaching in Yipirinya is undertaken by untrained Aboriginal teachers. They are all women from fringe dwelling communities who teach within their own community. The Aboriginal teaching staff are supported by three European staff, a Co-ordinator, who is heavily involved in administration, an Adult Educator, concerned with training and assisting the Aboriginal teachers, and a part-time Child Care Worker. An Aboriginal linguist from Victoria is also involved in the program, developing literacy materials for a bilingual program.

The schools are structured around traditional kinship groupings with, where necessary, more than one school operating in a community. Each school includes a wide age range and often includes young children and adults within the teaching situation. The school curriculum has two major components:

(a) literacy (in both traditional languages and English) and numeracy;

(b) cultural development, to maintain an identifiable Aboriginal culture.

Yipirinya is not a registered school and obtains no direct government funding, despite extended negotiations between the N.T. Education Department and Yipirinya. During 1982, in fact, the school was refused registration by the Minister for Education in the N.T., and an appeal is pending in the N.T. Supreme Court. The school is maintained financially from a variety of sources including overseas Church based relief agencies, such as the World Council of Churches. The school obtains considerable indirect support from the Northern Territory Education Department through the use of a variety of curriculum guidelines and materials.

Yipirinya is presently operating an informal child care program and regularly includes children of pre-school age. Nevertheless, the Yipirinya program remains in an early stage of development and its directions for early childhood programs still need to be clarified somewhat.

THE MISSIONS

Pre-school programs are offered at Mission Schools in four locations in the Northern Territory (Port Keats, Daly River, Bathurst Island and Santa Teresa). There were 126 Aboriginal and 7 non-Aboriginal enrolments in Mission pre-schools in 1981. The programs offered at Mission schools do not appear to differ substantially from those offered in other large Aboriginal communities. The following are extracts from descriptions of the three Northern Programs provided through the Catholic Education Office in Darwin. (30)

Port Keats

The years of schooling termed early childhood education are comprised of Pre-school, Transition, Years 1, 2 and 3. In this area of the school there is a program of bi-lingualism which in fact extends to Year 5 at present.

In each classroom an Aboriginal teacher assistant and a non-Aboriginal teacher work together. There is a very strong emphasis in the school on a team teaching approach, which most non-Aboriginal teachers are unaware of upon entering this work situation.

One of the most universal aims of an early childhood bilingual program is enrichment of a child's first language on which cognitive growth depends. With this aim in view, it then becomes obvious that curriculum content and styles of teaching must suit or be conducive to Aboriginal children's learning.

The pre-school children are involved in a very informal language based approach with little emphasis on the English language. As the children progress through Years 1-3 they adopt more formal learning styles and are exposed to a greater amount of oral English language learning.

All the Aboriginal teachers working in this area are females, all fairly young. None has had any formal teacher training.

In the pre-school area, children are admitted once they reach 4.

Daly River

Early childhood education in the pre-school is available for children from 3 years of age or when the mother wishes to send her child to school. The aim of the pre-school is to meet and develop the intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs of each child.

Aboriginal teaching assistants are with the children and give group lessons and supervise play. They are under the direction of a trained pre-school teacher. All lessons are given in the spoken language by the assistant teachers. English lessons are given by the teacher.

The program planned with the Aboriginal teachers is the same as in a town school but emphasis is given to the use of local materials, the use of the environment and the culture of the people. The hours are from 8.15 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. It is a full day program with a dinner and sleep time periods provided.

In this area of the school we have 1st year pre-school (3-year-olds), 2nd year pre-school (4-year-olds) and Transition (5-year-olds). While this division is made a child may move from one group to the next as he or she reaches the maturity necessary for him to cope with the group. Usually a child is promoted into Grade One at the age of 5+ to 6 years.

There is a liaison with the Health Centre at the hospital. A school clinic is held in both areas each day. A general check-up is carried out during the first week of each semester. If the on-site health staff is not satisfied with the progress of a child, he or she is referred to the visiting medical officer who comes on an aerial medical visit each three weeks. If a learning or emotional difficulty is noted it is referred to the Special Advisors in the Education Department.

Bathurst Island

The pre-school program aims to reinforce, consolidate and develop the learning that is already going on in the home environment, whilst introducing the novel school environment.

Thus, apart from free play activities (8.30 - 9.30 a.m.) singing and games and counting (9.30 - 9.50 a.m.) Tiwi story time (9.50 - 10.00 a.m.), all to encourage and develop the use of language, alongside early mathematical concepts and perceptual skills, there is a daily "formal" half hour session (11.00 - 11.30 a.m.) following out-door play after recess, based at first on the child's self concept and gradually over the year broadens to include family, relations, the community in general (housing and places such as the hospital, store, garage, etc.) and then life and food out in the bush.

The language of instruction is virtually all Tiwi, spoken by the two Tiwi teachers, parents and friends who attend during the morning activities (and occasionally the whole day), with some Tiwi and incidental English from the European teacher. We attempt to get out into the community and environs as much as possible.

After lunch there is one hour - taken up partly with routine (toileting, teeth cleaning etc.) with a half-hour session of music and dance, both traditional and occasionally more contemporary (i.e. creative dance). The children finish the day at 2.00 p.m. The teachers then have one hour for cleaning and tidying, and at least a half-hour for planning and preparation.

A one hour teacher training session is held in conjunction with Transition each Tuesday afternoon.

PARTICIPATION RATES

To determine participation rates, estimates of the Aboriginal population are necessary. For the NT it is clear that adequate estimates of the Aboriginal population, especially in urban centres, do not exist. The high levels of mobility, the transient nature of fringe camps and the lack of comparability of presently available statistics render statistical estimates unreliable. The following comments are based on personal observations and discussions in the NT.

Fringe Camps and Transitional Groups Even guesses at the size of the fringe camps around the main urban centres are difficult to come by. Yipirinya estimates, based on C.A.A.C. figures, suggest that some 1,500 Aboriginal people are living in fringe camps around Alice Springs. The D.A.A. community profiles suggest some 180 in the Darwin Area (excluding the 370 in the Bagot community) and 274 in the Katherine area. (31) However, a D.C.D. paper in 1980 identifies some 33 camps in both these areas, suggesting that the figure of 180 is an underestimate. (32) However, the unreliability of these figures needs to be stressed.

It is unlikely that very many of the children in the fringe camps are enrolled in pre-schools, and even fewer are likely to be attending. A significant proportion of the children attending the Traeger Park pre-schools in Alice Springs are drawn from the fringe camps, but this would be a small proportion of the possible Aboriginal enrolment. A mobile kindergarten in Alice Springs is attached to one of the fringe communities (Charles River Camp), providing pre-school services to that community. Yipirinya school is also attempting to provide some pre-school services to fringe camps in Alice Springs. The position in Darwin is described in the paper by the D.C.D.

> A growing problem is the number of school age children in Aboriginal Hostels and camps who have become permanent residents of Darwin but who do not attend school, or who attend but do not appear to benefit from schooling. Lack of transport is a major contributing factor. A further problem appears to be the low expectations of the teachers they come into contact with and the lack of tangible parental support. As permanent camps will probably stimulate the growth of the Aboriginal population in Darwin some serious investigation in this area is strongly indicated. (33)

In general then, little is known about fringe and transitional groups and little in the way of pre-school education has been made available for them. The development of Yipirinya school provides one avenue for the provision of local, community based pre-schools, while the on-going activities of the Department of Community Development Aboriginal Community Worker program could also encompass pre-school educational facilities.

Urban Aborigines While there is a substantial group of Aboriginal people living stable lives as permanent residents in the urban areas of the Northern Territory, this is again a group for whom adequate statistics are not available. Nevertheless, the impressions of many in the NT was that a high proportion of urban Aboriginal children are attending pre-schools, although there are no statistics to validate this belief. Bearing in mind the exclusion of the fringe camps, it is unlikely that the enrolment levels in this group would be below the NT average for Aboriginal children (75-84 percent).

Aboriginal Townships The impression is that most of the 4-year-old children in Aboriginal townships would be enrolled in pre-school and that the attendance rates are likely to be fairly high.

Estimates of total number of Aboriginal children aged 3, 4 and 5. Apart from an examination of the participation rates in different situations, it is possible to attempt an overall estimate of enrolments of Aboriginal pre-school children for the NT as a whole. Again, it must be emphasised that this is a process of estimating since no adequate direct statistics are available on the age specific Aboriginal population in the NT. One way to attempt an estimate is to begin with enrolment numbers of Aboriginal children in Northern Territory schools for older children where it is more likely that participation rates will be high.

The enrolments for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children aged 4 - 8 in NT schools in 1981 are as follows: (34)

Age in Years	4	5	6	7	8
Non-Aboriginal	1747	1624	1858	1936	1940
Aboriginal	675	740	783	846	861
Total	2422	2364	2641	2782	2801

The Aboriginal enrolments for ages 7 and 8 are probably a reasonable estimate of the total Aboriginal population in these age groups. There are two possible sources of error in these figures: (1) an over-estimate induced by the multiple enrolments of some children, and (2) an under-estimate induced by children not being enrolled in schools at all. Neither of these are likely to produce an error factor of greater than 10 percent; if the two sources of error are combined, a figure of 846 and 861 plus or minus 5 percent is not an unreasonable estimate for these age groups. The percentage age distribution for the Northern Territory (35) suggests that there would be minimal differences between these figures and those for younger groups (4, 5 and 6-year-olds), allowing an estimate of 850 plus or minus 5 percent in each of the younger groups.

An alternative estimate is provided by utilising the 1976 census material, and the crude birth rates for the Northern Territory, provided by the Northern Territory Medical Service. (36) These suggest:

Aboriginal Population 1976	23,751
Crude Birth Rate	33/1,000
No. of births 1976	785
Less I.M.R.	40
	745

This almost certainly underestimates the population, with the initial figure of 23,751 probably underestimating the total Aboriginal population considerably.

The extent of these differences in estimates are indicated by the A.B.S. estimates of 3,680 children in the age range 5 - 10 in 1981, and actual enrolments in Northern Terriroty schools of some 4,400 children in the same age range.

For the purposes of this report, then, we have estimated the actual numbers of Aboriginal children in each age group 3 to 6 as being 850 plus or minus 5 percent, a value very similar to that obtained in the 1976 Census. Using these estimates we are able to obtain the following figures for enrolments of 3 and 4-year-olds in the Northern Territory.

	Estimate	Enrolment	Percentage Enrolled
4-year-olds	850 + 5% = 893	675	75.6
4-year-olds	850 - 5% = 807	675	83.6
3-year-olds	850 + 5% = 893	233	26.0
3-year-olds	850 - 5% = 807	233	29.0

Similar estimates for the non-Aboriginal population suggest that some 90 percent of 4-year-olds are enrolled in Northern Territory schools and some 10 percent of 3-year-olds.

STAFFING

The staffing of early childhood programs varies greatly in different contexts in the NT, but the teacher in charge in pre-school programs is usually a trained white teacher. In 1980 26 Aboriginal teachers were members of the Commonwealth Teaching Service in the NT and they worked almost entirely in Aboriginal schools. But only one of these is working as a pre-school teacher. Further, there is a shortage of pre-school teachers in the NT and as a consequence, teachers with formal qualifications in other areas (e.g. primary teaching) are regularly allocated to pre-schools.

Aboriginal Pre-school Assistants are used extensively in

Aboriginal schools, with a general expectation that there is at least one Aboriginal Assistant working with every teacher.

Staffing roles in schools on large Aboriginal communities seem to be moving towards Aboriginal people taking greater and greater responsibility for the programs and non-Aboriginal staff providing a support function. This is occurring despite the fact that the Aboriginal staff may not have formal qualifications.

Staffing in schools initiated by Aboriginal Communities, e.g. Yipirinya, is chiefly Aboriginal with some white staff used for support or in specialised roles determined by the Aborigines.

The Northern Territory Education Department maintains an extensive Advisory staff and support services for teachers and assistants, including advisers in the fields of pre-school education, the teaching of English as a second language, Aboriginal teacher education, etc. and separate regional advisory services.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ISSUES

Some of the most significant developments in pre-schooling for Aboriginal children are at present occurring in Aboriginal schools in the NT. These programs are now showing an emphasis on the consolidation of the child's first language, the encouragement of a strong sense of cultural identity, increasing emphasis on traditional patterns of communication and adult-child relationships, and an increasing use of culturally and geographically appropriate teaching and learning styles. Associated with this is the greater role in the planning and implementation of programs by Aboriginal staff. It means there is a move away from spatial, temporal and authority structures of western pre-schools towards a form of pre-schooling more consistent with Aboriginal culture and ideals. But, moves in this direction still face limitations and difficulties partly because of:

(a) A shortage of Aboriginal staff with formal early childhood qualifications. This, of course, raises the question of what constitutes appropriate training for Aboriginal staff undertaking these roles, and what is the most appropriate way of providing such training.

(b) A shortage of non-Aboriginal staff with the experience and qualifications required to operate as catalysts and support personnel in the development of these programs. Again, this raises questions of training, selection and retention of staff - questions which need to be addressed urgently.

(c) The appropriateness of pre-school buildings needs to be reassessed. If the pre-schools are to become more integrated with the communities, they will require very different kinds of buildings to those currently provided.

(d) The administrative structures of the school systems need modification in order to incorporate the very different kinds of pre-schools envisaged above. This will place particular demands on school principals.

The situation of Station schools presents unique difficulties for future development. Pre-schools are generally not available in station schools and there are formidable problems in providing such experience. Nevertheless, attention might be directed toward Aboriginal staff in the schools undertaking early childhood programs at Batchelor and non-Aboriginal staff being provided with opportunities for in-service courses in early childhood education.

A final issue of great importance to Aboriginal Communities in the NT concerns the response of Government authorities to their needs or attempts to initiate programs, the way such authorities become involved (if at all) and the effects of their involvement. The C.A.A.C., for example, is concerned that the involvement of government authorities may stunt the growth of Aboriginal initiatives or direct such initiatives towards inappropriate white solutions to black problems. There seems to be an urgent need for research into the ways non-Aboriginal agencies can provide support for Aboriginal community based programs while not usurping the authority and responsibility for developments within these programs. This raises questions about:

(a) the nature, adequacy and effectiveness of Aboriginal consultative arrangements in the Northern Territory;

(b) the response of government departments to this consultation;

(c) the nature of, and problems arising from governmental constraints of funding, staffing, etc.

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SUMMARY TABLE: NORTHERN TERRITORY

PRE-SCHOOLS

Administrative Structure	The N.T. Department of Education is responsible for pre-school education. All pre-schools are formally attached to schools and are under the direction of the school principal.
Age of Admission	Normally available to Aboriginal children aged 3 to 5, unless pressure of high enrolments necessitates delaying admission until age 4.
Funding	Pre-schools are operated within N.T. Department of Education funding structures, supported by a specific Commonwealth grant. Individual pre-schools are funded via the general funding to the school to which they are attached.
Aims and Philosophies	"Meaningful early education experiences for Aboriginal children can only be provided by Aboriginal adults". Non-Aboriginal teachers should become "facilitators" who will help Aboriginal parents and teachers achieve their educational goals. Language policy: the aim is to enrich the child's first language. first language.
Enrolments	1,194 Aboriginal pre-school enrolments in August 1981 in N.T. Department of Education schools. Four mission pre-schools enrolled an additional 126 Aboriginal children.
Participation Rates	Rough estimates only: Aboriginal three year olds: 26 to 29% (non-Aborigines 10%); Aboriginal four year olds: 75 to 84% (non-Aborigines 90%).
Staffing	Predominantly trained anglo-Australian teachers, with at least one Aboriginal aide per teacher. Aboriginal people taking increasing responsibility for programs, however, with non-Aborigines providing a support function.

CHILD CARE

Administrative Structure	Programs are administered by the Community Welfare Division of the N.T. Department of Community Development, with most of the funding supplied by the Commonwealth via the Children's Services Program.
Aboriginal Participation	(i) In 1981 approximately 20 to 24 children were attending Day Care Centres; (ii) only two children were involved in Family Day Care programs; (iii) the Homemaker Services Program was having variable success in Aboriginal communities (no participation data available, however).

INDEPENDENT PROGRAMS

Several autonomous, Aboriginal-initiated early childhood programs are now functioning in the N.T., but sparse documentation and relative recency of these developments makes level of participation difficult to assess. Both child care and pre-school provisions are involved.

CHAPTER 8

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia has an Aboriginal population of about 11-12,000 with concentrations in Adelaide, some Aboriginal communities in country towns and in the north-west of the State. Pre-school educational programs are run by both the Department of Education (in child/parent centres) and the Kindergarten Union (in pre-school kindergartens). The South Australian Government has a policy of "one year of free pre-school education for all four-year-olds", but this has been modified somewhat in the case of Aboriginal children (see below). Since 1974 responsibility for the planning and co-ordination of education, care, welfare and health services for young children in South Australia has been in the hands of the Childhood Services Council (CSC).* CSC's role involves the distribution of Commonwealth (Children's Services Program) and State money for pre-school services, with many of these services covering Aboriginal children and being funded in "normal" ways. In addition, some funds for Aboriginal pre-school services are provided by the D.A.A. or directly by the O.C.C.

THE KINDERGARTEN UNION

OVERVIEW

The Kindergarten Union (KU) of South Australia was established in 1905 and during its existence has been the principal agency involved in the provision of pre-school education. Its Annual Report for 1980, (1) for example, quotes figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showing that from 1977 to 1980 more than 80 percent of 4 year olds enrolled in pre-school were in K.U. kindergartens. The K.U. establishes and manages kindergartens and appoints and pays staff in those kindergartens. In addition, independent community run kindergartens may affiliate with the K.U. The requirements for affiliation cover standards, e.g. in staffing and facilities, and as a consequence, such affiliated kindergartens receive all the facilities and services of the K.U. in the same way as a branch kindergarten. The 1980 Annual Report noted there were 292 kindergartens, and included in that number were 23 affiliated kindergartens. In addition, services were provided via "fifteen mobile units, five regional offices, one special services clinic and head office". (2) The K.U. operates an extensive advisory service for kindergartens as well as a substantial "Special Services Division" which contains psychologists, speech pathologists, special education consultants and social workers.

The main focus of K.U. kindergartens is sessional programs for 4 year old children, primarily because staff salaries in kindergartens are paid by C.S.C. almost exclusively on the basis of the number of 4 year olds enrolled and regularly attending. Nevertheless, "integration and diversification" of services is also a strong feature of K.U. kindergartens, with activities such as occasional or full day care, crisis care, playgroups, parent education programs etc. to some extent a feature of almost all kindergartens. The Annual Report for 1980 gives A.B.S. figures for the number of 4 year olds enrolled in 1980 at 13,515, most of whom took part in three or four sessions each week of about three hours duration per session. However, the Report mentions that in 1980 services were provided for "more than nineteen thousand children". The children over and above 4 year olds were included in "pre-entry" or "special" programs for children between 3 and a half and 4 years of age, playgroups mostly for children 2 or 3 years of age and some kind of care service. The care services were "mainly provided through the agency of: eight branch and affiliated care centres providing centre-based day care; occasional and emergency care services provided through most of the Kindergarten Union's 296 branch and affiliate centres as part of the policy of integrated and diversified services." (3)

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* The CSC was disbanded in 1982.

The K.U. has a policy of "integrating all children into what might be termed 'normal' kindergartens. Such a policy has meant that the Union has not favoured 'special' kindergartens for specific groups of people such as Aboriginals". (4) The belief is that the basic type of pre-schooling is a common need of all children, including Aboriginals.

Other aspects of the policy of the K.U. have been summarised by Penny (5) as follows:

> The policy of the Union is unambiguous and unexceptionable. Early in 1970 a circular was sent to all centres, 'Procedure for Application and Enrolment of Aboriginal Children in Kindergarten Union Branch Kindergartens'. Among its statements were:
>
> > Organisations or persons knowing of parents of children of Aboriginal descent who wish their children to attend kindergarten were asked to get in touch with the Union and to help parents to make an enrolment of children at three years of age. They will be given as long as possible in the kindergarten to supplement any possible deprivation.
>
> A later memorandum went further still. It asked that preference in enrolment be given to children of Aboriginal descent. A special form was prepared for a report at the end of every term upon the progress of each Aboriginal child. Directors of centres were asked to do what was possible towards arranging transport for children.

The policy, therefore, seems clear and seeks to facilitate, at an official level, the enrolment and attendance of Aboriginal children. Ebbeck (6) along with others (e.g. Penny (7)) who have examined numbers of Aboriginal children in kindergartens admits that "despite such a policy the numbers of Aboriginal pre-school age children enrolled and attending kindergartens in South Australia remained small". Possible reasons for low participation rates are considered below.

Funding

General funding for kindergartens is provided by Commonwealth (via the Children's Services Program) and State funds so that capital costs for some new kindergartens are covered, salary costs for staff is fully funded and a proportion of recurrent expenses is catered for. As for other States, the proportion of Commonwealth support for kindergartens has decreased over recent years to a level now below 30 percent.

As already stated, the funds for pre-schools are administered by C.S.C. The Childhood Service Council claims to be "flexible" in its allocation of funds for pre-schools with enrolments of Aboriginal children, as it is with any group of children seen to have "special needs". There are no formal guidelines yet approved, but the informal operating principle of C.S.C. is that pre-schools with substantial Aboriginal enrolments should be funded so they may be staffed at a ratio of one staff to eight children in contrast to the normal ratio of 1:10. The funding for the Alberton Aboriginal pre-school (a pre-school initiated by an Aboriginal group in Port Adelaide that subsequently affiliated with the K.U.) is even more generous, however, at the ratio of 1:5. It must be remembered though, that many children below the age of 3 also attend at Alberton so that when this is taken into account the ratio of 1:5 is less generous than it may seem. In other pre-schools, each Aboriginal child has been given a weighting of 1.25 in the calculation of total enrolments, the same weighting given to other groups of children classified as having "special needs". There is one other way in which special consideration is given to Aboriginal children. This is in terms of children outside the 4 year old age group being counted in the calculation of enrolments as a basis for funding.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

At September, 1981, the K.U. had about 150 Aboriginal children in kindergartens. Most of these were 4 year olds and most of them were in a relatively small number of kindergartens. None was in exclusively Aboriginal kindergartens although some were in kindergartens where a large proportion of the enrolled children were Aboriginal (Flinders at Port Augusta, Alberton in Adelaide and Murat Bay in Ceduna, with these three having a total Aboriginal enrolment of 63). Most of the Aboriginal children were enrolled in numbers of 5 or less (30 kindergartens had only 1 or 2 Aboriginal children). Only 45 kindergartens had any Aboriginal enrolments. In addition to the three main kindergartens listed above as having significant Aboriginal enrolments, there are two "pre-pre-schools" for younger children that are affiliated with the K.U. These are at the Port Lincoln Children's Centre and the Tji Tji Wiltja Centre in Port Augusta. A D.A.A. funded pre-pre-school also operates at Ceduna. In third term 1981 as a result of initiatives from the Aboriginal Education Foundation (see below), and in co-operation with the K.U., an all-day session for 3-4 year old Aboriginal children in the Elizabeth area was set up at a local kindergarten. A local Aboriginal mother is acting as supervisor. (8)

The present situation compares well with that in 1970 and 1976 quoted by Penny. (9)

> In 1970 there appear to have been 50 or fewer Aboriginal children enrolled in pre-schools conducted by the Kindergarten Union. By 1976 there were 106 in 42 of the Union's 253 centres. With the exception of one centre, begun on the initiative of a local Aboriginal Association (Alberton Kindergarten), Aboriginal children are always a minority in Union centres. Omitting ... the centre with the largest number of Aboriginal children, then 82 Aboriginal children are scattered in 41 centres, with none in the remaining 211.

The pattern for 1981 has remained consistent with that for 1976 in that there are a few centres with a large number of Aboriginal children, many centres with a very small number (1-3 or 4) and the majority with no Aboriginal children. The overall pattern of Aboriginal enrolments is consistent with K.U. policy of not providing "special" services for minority groups.

Aims and Orientation of the Programs, Curriculum etc.

Dr. M. O'Neill (Director, Professional Services, Kindergarten Union), described (personal communication) the program in kindergartens with substantial Aboriginal enrolments as basically similar in aim to other pre-school programs in kindergartens, e.g. to enhance self-awareness, develop language and problem solving skills etc. The difference is, she claimed, that they also teach "Aboriginal studies" to the children in the sense of using Aboriginal stories, songs and knowledge. A difficulty she mentioned in adding an Aboriginal component to the program is the variety which exists within Aboriginal culture around Australia.

In terms of the program for Aboriginal children provided in kindergartens where only a few Aboriginals are enrolled, much can be gained from the reports by Penny (10), Wundersitz (11) on the Port Adelaide area and Crohn (12) on the Elizabeth area. Penny sent a questionnaire to staff in 253 K.U. centres in 1976 and received a return of 192. The questionnaire covered their beliefs and practices in teaching all, but especially Aboriginal, children. His main conclusion was as follows: (13)

> Programs in the main are of the traditional pattern. Most pre-school teachers feel that these are suitable for Aboriginal children. Pre-school teachers, like the rest of us, do not know enough about Aboriginal feelings and hopes. Most are still averting their professional eyes from a consideration of a more fruitful relationship between pre-schooling and schooling. The concern and care of those who have Aboriginal children in their centres is kindly, warm and sincere.

He adds (14) that such care and concern "is also not nearly enough". Here (15) he seemed to be critical of the notion that all children should be treated in the "same" way and given the "same" program, unless by "same" was meant that "programs of activities and styles of interaction should be different enough to conduce well to the development of very different individuals". (16) Penny suggested that the needs of Aboriginal children are different and quoted evidence (17) that pre-school teachers also tended to see their needs as different. Despite this, "more pre-school teachers than not believe that their standard program need not be modified" (18) for Aboriginal children. Possibly this answer needs to be viewed in the context of a subsequent question where the largest number of pre-school teachers described as "insufficient" their training for dealing with ethnic minority groups (including Aboriginals).

The attitudes, skills and efforts of individual teachers emerged from reports by Crohn (19) in the Elizabeth area and Wundersitz (20) in Port Adelaide, as a significant factor in the type of program provided for Aboriginal children and the kind of relationship that may develop between the kindergarten and the Aboriginal family. Crohn reported: "None of the (kindergarten) directors made any umprompted remarks in which they suggested that Aboriginal children in Elizabeth required different programs from those established for white children". (21) When Wundersitz asked the staff in eleven pre-schools in the Port Adelaide area whether "special or compensatory programs are required for Aboriginal children?" she found that "only two of the eleven kindergartens favoured a compensatory program for Aboriginal children but gave no reasons to substantiate this response". She added:

> Three kindergartens (including the two kindergartens who had most dealings with Aboriginal children - namely Alberton and Taperoo) rejected this suggestion outright on the grounds that Aboriginal children were no different from other children and therefore did not require special treatment. (22)

Clearly, there exists a range of opinions about the kind of program most suitable for Aboriginal children in urban society. Still more important, there seems to be considerable uncertainty. Penny raised an important issue when he discussed possible meanings of "same" and "special" programs. Clearly it could be that a program could be described as the "same" as for other children but in many senses be "special". If the child's Aboriginal identity is to be preserved or enhanced, then this implies that the program would differ somewhat from that provided a white middle class child.

"Guidelines of Aboriginal Pre-School Education" were developed by Joan Fry for a National Meeting on Aboriginal Early Childhood Education. In discussion of those guidelines many participants saw them as being basically consistent with pre-schooling for any child. It is possible to see them in this way. Equally, however, there are parts of the guidelines which suggest something "special" for Aboriginal children, e.g. "3. They should be provided with an opportunity to learn about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal customs, skills, expectations etc." and "5. Aboriginal pre-school programs should be based on what is known of Aboriginal child-rearing practices ...".

There seems a need for a co-ordinated undertaking to provide more detailed guidelines for Aboriginal pre-schooling, especially for teachers who may have only a small number of Aboriginal children enrolled and who may have little relevant knowledge or training. Alternatively, it would be helpful for these teachers if an authoritative statement could be made that the "basic program" is suitable for Aboriginal children as it is for all children.

Other issues which became of central concern in Wundersitz's (23) assessment of the child care needs of Aboriginal families in Port Adelaide related to length of session, availability of occasional care and the age of entry to kindergarten. There seemed to be some agreement that full-day programs were more suitable and beneficial to Aboriginal children than sessional pre-school only. Further, she found there were times when children needed occasional care outside pre-school session times. She didn't suggest that kindergartens necessarily should cater for occasional care, but did argue that some form of provisions for occasional care should be available. Lastly, along with many others, Wundersitz discusses the issue of age of entry to formal pre-schooling for Aboriginal children. This of course has implications for the "program", as the kind of program will vary according to whether it is designed for 3 year olds or 4 year olds. There again was agreement that pre-school should be available to Aboriginal children by the age of 3 or 3 and a half years of age. This of course has happened in many areas in South Australia with pre-pre-schools being set up for Aboriginal children. The policy of the C.S.C. and K.U. also means that Aboriginal children may enter kindergartens prior to age 4.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

"In 1969 the South Australian Government, through the Minister of Education, made a decision that the Education Department should be responsible for pre-school education of young Aboriginal children on reserves and in remote areas". (24) Pre-school education in the Education Department is usually provided in their "Child/Parent Centres" which are typically attached to Primary or Junior Primary Schools. The development of the Education Department's involvement in pre-school education is shown by the fact that in 1973 it had no pre-school services but by 1978 had 82 (nearly half in country areas) of a total of 370 pre-school services in South Australia. (25) The major impetus for the involvement of the Education Department in pre-school services came in 1974 with the approval by the Australian Government of Interim Pre-School Program Grants for services in several low socio-economic areas in Adelaide and in one rural community. (26) "Amendment to the Education Act occurred in 1979 and provided the Education Department with the power to offer pre-school education 'for children whose parents desire that they should receive pre-school education at Government schools'". (27)

Funding

Education Department's child/parent centres, including those in Aboriginal schools are funded in the same way as the K.U. kindergartens, i.e. from a combination of State and Commonwealth (Children's Services Program) money which is distributed by the Childhood Services Council. The situation is complicated somewhat by the fact that general funding for the school may in part be used in the child/parent centre depending on the school administration (e.g. some school staff may be used in the child/parent centre for brief periods). Another complicating factor is D.A.A. funding for Aboriginal education that provides Aboriginal assistants in all Aboriginal schools.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

In 1981 just over 200 Aboriginal pre-school aged children were recorded in South Australian schools by the Education Department of S.A. By far the majority of these (186) were in 13 Aboriginal schools (i.e. schools with exclusive or predominant Aboriginal enrolment and administered within the Aboriginal and Isolated Education Section of the Education Department). The schools are both "tribally oriented" and "non-tribally oriented". The numbers of Aboriginal pre-school children in each of the schools is shown in Table 3a. The remaining pre-school Aboriginal children were scattered in small numbers among 9 other schools. Although not yet available for 1981, the statistics for 1979 (28) and 1980 (29) showed that just over half the Aboriginal children listed in Education Department pre-schools were below the age of 4 years. The figure of 200 compares well with the 206 listed as enrolled in pre-schools in 1980, but is a drop from the number in 1979 (260).

Table 3a

NUMBER OF ABORIGINAL PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN, 1981

Tribally Oriented Schools		Non-Tribally Oriented Schools	
Amata	23	Koonibba	9
Fregon	24	Marree	7
Indulkana	28	Nepabunna	11
Yalata	31	Oodnadatta	3
Pipalyatjara	8	Point McLeay	12
		Point Pearce	19
		Mimili	11

Aims and Orientation of the Programs, Curriculum etc.

Children in tribally oriented schools "live in tribal camps and have Pitjantjatjara as their first language. Aboriginal teachers and aides are used in a team-teaching situation with the non-Aboriginal teacher. Emphasis is placed on community involvement in the work and life of the school". (30) For tribal schools in general, the emphasis of the Education Department is placed on "bilingual-bicultural education" and learning English as a second language (31). J. Coker, (32) Superintendent of Aboriginal and Isolated Education, has described the approach of Aboriginal child/parent centres in tribal schools as "family oriented, catering for mothers and siblings of varying ages as well as for other adults from the community". The first and most important operating principle is a "welcome all comers" philosophy. This orientation is illustrated by the fact that in March 1981 the Education Department conducted a three-day workshop for teachers and Aboriginal assistants working at the early childhood level in tribal schools based on material from the Parent Education Early Childhood Education (PEECE) program of A. Grey.

Coker (33) further describes the approach in tribal situations as follows:

> In traditional situations, where facilities are available in the local child/parent centre, mothers and other adults come for reasons additional to bringing children. It may be to use the showers for themselves and their children,

> to do their washing, to chat to others and to be generally associated with a supportive, educational environment. They meet some of their own needs by drawing, painting, looking at magazines, handling puzzles, games and other equipment, by watching a teacher or Aboriginal assistant-led group of children and by participating in some of the childrens' activities.

Coker (34) goes on to describe aspects of pre-schools in non-traditional schools, where he says:

> The centre plays an important support role in restoring some stability to family situations where, for example, very young mothers have passed the care of children to older family members, or where there are one-parent families. The centre may provide activities in communities which often lack opportunities for stimulating things to do ... (it) is the meeting place for mothers' sewing, cooking and fitness groups. Most of the children (in non-traditional schools) have English as their first language and all instruction is given in this language. (35)

Although there are certain common themes in the approach of Education Department pre-schools, it cannot be assumed they are all alike or even very similar. This is because "the centres themselves and their programs vary to suit the needs of individual communities". (36) Of course they will also reflect the abilities, attitudes and personality of staff in each centre. Fran Bailey, Early Childhood Adviser (Personal communication, 1981) described the basic aims of Aboriginal child/parent centres as being the same as for any pre-schooling, e.g. in terms of cognitive, language, social, physical development of children. Aspects of the content of the programs however will reflect the local environment and cultural background of the children participating.

All Aboriginal child/parent centres run sessional rather than full-day programs. Children go home for lunch. Home for the children in most Aboriginal schools is quite close and children (and others) are free to return to the pre-school again in the afternoon and many do so. Some of the child/parent centres run a playgroup and others take equipment and materials into the local camp, especially if there are young children who do not come to the child/parent centre. For example, such "camp pre-schools" occur at Yalata and Amata.

PARTICIPATION RATES

As for other States, much of the data on participation rates for Aboriginal children is impressionistic and anecdotal. However, more detailed information has been provided in the reports of Penny (37), Wundersitz (38) and Crohn (39). Penny's report examined the situation rather generally in South Australia, while Wundersitz focused on the Port Adelaide area and Crohn studied the Elizabeth area. These studies refer mainly to kindergartens and to Aborigines in urban areas. Before turning to their findings, it is worth recording the impressions of Fran Bailey (Adviser, Early Childhood Education for Aboriginal Pre-Schools, Education Department) about Aboriginal participation in the more isolated Aboriginal communities served by the Education Department.

She claimed that participation rates varied from one centre to another. Nepabunna and Fregon were given as examples where almost all the potential children were enrolled and attending. Both of these were described as "good situations" in that the staff and the local community worked well together. At Fregon the teacher is in her third year in the community and has developed a good working relationship with the Aboriginal aide. She said continuity of service was important to the Aboriginal community and parents had developed confidence in the teacher and the pre-school. The proportion of children enrolled varied among other centres, with some being as low as about 50 percent. She described the attendance rates of those who were enrolled as good and probably no different from the rates expected for pre-school children anywhere.

Penny (40), in referring mainly to kindergarten attendance, expressed a belief that, so far, efforts to encourage Aboriginals to participate in pre-schooling had not been very successful. "The numbers enrolled are still small" he said. He examined estimates of the Aboriginal population:

> It would appear that the total number of 4 and 5 year old Aboriginal children in South Australia lies somewhere between 600 and 750. If a third, say, of the 3 year olds are added (a policy supported by the Federal Government and the Kindergarten Union) then the total will lie between 700 and 850. Against these figures, the number enrolled in Union centres in 1976, namely 106, would seem to be unduly small. But the concern of the Union is for Aboriginal children within reach of its centres. Lacking more dependable figures than are at present obtainable, my unsophisticated hunch is that the number of Aboriginal children for the present Kindergarten Union centres could be from 2 and a half to 3 times larger than it is now. (41)

It is important to mention that Penny states that his estimates may be subject to a good deal of error, perhaps an error rate of up to 50 percent. "This is consistent with the uncertainty of the estimates of the total Aboriginal population in South Australia. These range from 9,500 to 14,500 ..." (42) Therefore, apart from the possibility of low participation rates, the other conclusion to be drawn from Penny's report is that it is very difficult to estimate participation rates given present statistical information.

The findings of Wundersitz (43) and Crohn (44) in specific areas of Adelaide do not support Penny's claims about low participation rates. In Port Adelaide Wundersitz found that 8 percent of children enrolled in eleven kindergartens in her study were Aboriginal. If they used kindergartens at the same rate as their representation in the population of pre-school children only 2.3 percent of the children in kindergartens would have been Aboriginal. Crohn (45) in the Elizabeth area,concluded that "the percentages of Aboriginal children attending funded kindergartens, pre-schools and pre-entry groups are similar to the percentages of the total under 5 year old population using these services". Although she described the figures as "similar" it was true that only 61 percent of Aboriginal children aged 4 and 5 years attended funded pre-schools and kindergartens, while 81 percent of all children aged 4 and 5 years were in funded pre-schools and kindergartens in the Elizabeth area. It is again important to note the difficulties Crohn encountered in trying to obtain complete details of the Aboriginal child population even though she was studying a relatively restricted area for which she thought there were fairly thorough official records. She says:

> It was emphasised how difficult a job any individual or organisation has if attempting to identify the urban Aboriginal population from official records, which is one of the reasons why often such attempts succeed only if the assistance of Aboriginals and recourse to their knowledge of where kin and friends reside is sought. (46)

Wundersitz (47) also makes relevant comments when she says:

> Just to locate and keep track of Aboriginal families is in itself extremely time consuming, given their very high rates of residential mobility. To illustrate, 1976 census figures for the Port Adelaide L.G.A. showed that 32.1 percent of the 364 Aboriginals interviewed had shifted address at least once in the previous year (1975-76) compared with 15.7 percent for the total population ... More significantly, mobility rates tend to be higher amongst newly formed families who, not yet having acquired their own Aboriginal funded house, are often forced to shift

from one relative to another during the first years of their existence. Since it is these families which often contain children of pre-school age, it follows that the task of keeping track of them for kindergarten and/or playgroup attendance is considerable and can only be done by workers who have direct access to the Aboriginal community's information network.

The three reports (48) also contain information and comments on attendance rates for Aboriginal children who have enrolled. In Penny's (49) survey of teachers he asked various questions about the attendance of Aboriginal children. 85 percent of teachers described Aboriginal attendance as "regular" or "fairly regular" and Penny comments that this belies the stereotype of irregular attendance for Aboriginal children. When asked about reasons for absence, teachers mainly said "family mobility" or "poor health", then "transport problems" and lastly "parents just don't take the trouble". Again Penny comments that these results belie another stereotype.

Crohn (50) makes some interesting comments on children who enrol but subsequently never attend kindergarten. She notes that often this arises when the child is the only Aboriginal child attending that particular kindergarten (51) and comments:

> ... it seems obvious that the existence of the support that two or more families feel themselves to be giving to each other is important in raising the success rate of children's attendance and parents' involvement in the education system. (52)

For other Aboriginal children, however, she found they were mostly regular attenders: "of the 14 Aboriginal children who had attended in 1979, all but two were regular attenders". (53) When she examined reasons for children being absent from kindergarten sessions she remarked: "those reasons given by directors for absence of Aboriginal children did not differ greatly from those offered for European children". (54)

In Wundersitz's (55) study of Port Adelaide she found attendance patterns varied from kindergarten to kindergarten and from one child to another. The main reasons for poor attendance seemed to be family mobility, the lack of provision of taxi transport and the non-availability of a full-day session. The latter emerged from an examination of the Alberton Aboriginal Kindergarten when the attendance rate was described as "excellent", with average attendance being more than 75 percent of enrolments except on Wednesdays when attendance rates dropped below 50 percent. Wednesday "is the only day when sessional rather than full-day attendance is available and according to the director, mothers claim they do not send their children on Wednesdays 'because the half day is not worth it'". (56) It seems it is "not worth it" in the sense of the effort and difficulties in transporting the children to kindergarten (many families travel 15 or 20 kilometres to get there) as well as in the sense that the children don't get as much benefit from a half day session.

Reasons for Aboriginal children not participating in kindergartens is also examined in the three reports. White teachers' perceptions of reasons for Aboriginals not enrolling their children are outlined by Penny. (57) They mainly thought Aboriginals didn't participate because they were "not interested" and "parents do not know what centres offer". However, the complexity and variety of reasons for non-participation is readily apparent from both Wundersitz's and Crohn's research, and the simplicity of white teachers' views becomes obvious. Certainly it was true that some Aboriginal parents were not interested or aware of services, but many other factors emerged as contributors to the fact that Aborigines did or did not participate in available kindergartens.

Wundersitz (58) asked kindergarten directors whether they knew of any Aboriginal children in the area not enrolled at the kindergarten. Seven of the eleven:

> Knew of no Aboriginal children in the area eligible for pre-school. Nor had they made any attempt to look for any, yet during the course of the family interview program, we located at least eight young children whom we subsequently enrolled at kindergarten. These had escaped the attention of directors. This indicates that unless Aboriginal parents are prepared to approach kindergartens themselves (and experience has shown that most are not) the kindergarten's ability to locate Aboriginal children tends to be fairly low, not only because of a lack of knowledge regarding the actual location of such families, but also because of a lack of time for extensive home visiting required to encourage Aboriginal attendance.

But it was also clear from both Wundersitz and Crohn that there were some directors of kindergartens who were unwilling to seek Aboriginal enrolments or who felt they lacked skills and the confidence to make home visits to encourage Aboriginal enrolments. Directors made similar remarks to Penny (59) e.g. "No I've never visited an Aboriginal home, but I would if I felt I could do it without hurting their feelings or feeling awkward myself" and "I did try it once but it didn't go. I think I sort of marched up to that door and was uptight before it opened". It is from comments such as these that Penny concluded (60) "contacts between centres and the Aboriginal parents are still few and limited, and significant involvements of Aborigines even more so" and recommended "in areas where there are many Aboriginal families arrangements be made for an Aborigine to maintain more direct and sustained liaison than full-time pre-school teachers would be able to do".

There seems to be some agreement that it is important for someone, whether the kindergarten director, or a liaison officer, to directly contact Aboriginal families, partly in order to provide information about the availability of services, but also to encourage them to participate. Urban Aborigines often lack general community expectations about the availability of services and seem reluctant to take initiatives in utilising such services. This is where Aboriginal liaison officers have been shown to perform an important function.

The role of Aboriginal liaison officers is not new in South Australia. It has been fulfilled in the pre-school area for some time by the Aboriginal Education Foundation (AEF) (61). The A.E.F. was mentioned repeatedly by Wunderstiz and Crohn as a factor contributing to Aboriginal children enrolling at and then regularly attending pre-school sessions. The A.E.F. and its work will now be briefly described to show the way an organisation can influence the use of pre-school services.

THE ABORIGINAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Aboriginal Education Foundation of South Australia (Inc.) was formed in 1965. Since 1969 it has concentrated its efforts on pre-schooling for Aboriginal children although its activities are by no means limited to this sphere (62). It receives funding mainly from the Commonwealth (D.A.A.), but this is supplemented as well by State Government grants.

The A.E.F. :

> Acts as a liaison or bridging agency between the kindergartens and families. Its role is to locate Aboriginal children of pre-school age; inform parents of the services offered by kindergartens and directly facilitate parental contact with and use of these kindergartens by introducing them to staff members, assisting with the enrolment of their children and providing on-going, family-based support to ensure maximum benefits from kindergarten attendance. (63)
>
> From July, 1980, to August, 1981, the A.E.F. ... (was) ... instrumental in the enrolment and continued attendance of approximately 112 Aboriginal children at more than 24 kindergartens including the Alberton Kindergarten in the metropolitan and Murray Bridge areas. (64)

An important aspect of its role has been the provision of transport for children when family circumstances prevented it. Thus, about 46 children at the Alberton Aboriginal Kindergarten have been transported by A.E.F. (in previous years by taxi, but since mid-1981 by bus). In addition, 29 other children are taken to and from kindergarten by A.E.F. provided taxi.(65)

The attendance rates of Aboriginal children in kindergartens in Port Adelaide and Elizabeth have been largely attributed to the A.E.F. Thus, Wundersitz (66) says of the Port Adelaide area:

> As noted, Aboriginal use of kindergartens is extremely high. This may largely be attributed to the work done by the A.E.F., as indicated by the fact that of the 198 Aboriginal children who are known to have attended kindergartens in the Port Adelaide L.G.A. since 1970, at least 69 percent were enrolled and given on-going support by this agency.

Wundersitz (67) also noted that where A.E.F. contact has not been made:

> There is some evidence to suggest that (i) the period of enrolment tends to be shorter and (ii) the attendance more irregular than at kindergartens where A.E.F. support has been enlisted.

Crohn (68) makes similar positive comments about the role of the A.E.F. in the Elizabeth area. Wundersitz (69) lists some of the characteristics of the A.E.F. that she believes make it highly effective:

> (i) It is a small-scale operation employing only two Aboriginal and one non-Aboriginal workers;
>
> (ii) It is essentially independent of Government control and is therefore not hampered by bureaucratic 'red tape';
>
> (iii) Its operation is based entirely on a program of home visiting, which means that its workers actually go to the families rather than waiting for families to come to them, as occurs with so many Government agencies.
>
> As a result of these characteristics, the services offered by the A.E.F. are highly accessible to the Aboriginal community and because interaction takes place on a personalised, non-threatening level, A.E.F. workers have, over a 15 year period, become well-known and accepted within that community, while simultaneously acquiring considerable knowledge and understanding of the needs of its members.
>
> Through this method of direct and personal contact, the A.E.F. has been successful in overcoming many of the recognised barriers, such as lack of knowledge, lack of self-confidence, etc. which appear to restrict Aboriginal access to community facilities.

Aboriginal Use of Other Pre-School Services

In their studies of the Port Adelaide and Elizabeth areas respectively, Wundersitz (70) and Crohn (71) examined Aboriginal usage of a wide range of pre-school services - including playgroups, child/parent resource centres, toy libraries, day care centres, family day care, school recreation programs, creches etc. The overwhelming finding in both studies was that other pre-school services and facilities are used by Aboriginals either to a negligible degree or at a rate much below the average for the white community (with the exception of Family Day Care and a Mobile Toy Library in Port Adelaide). The lack of participation in playgroups can "largely be attributed to a lack of knowledge regarding the location, functioning and role of playgroups". (72) She also believes lack of liaison between playgroup representatives and the Aboriginal community is a factor in the low participation. Lack of liaison and lack of knowledge among Aborigines is also seen as contributing to low use of the Child/Parent Resource Centre in Port Adelaide. The research in Port Adelaide:

> Illustrated the crucial need for specialised liaison personnel to mediate between the essentially white-dominated facilities and the Aboriginal family to overcome the barriers created by lack of information and lack of confidence in approaching and utilising such facilities. (73)

As far as we are aware, detailed studies of Aboriginal usage rates for the pre-school services other than kindergartens and pre-schools have not been undertaken in other areas of Australia. However, the informal comments and observations of most people in other States are consistent with the low usage rates found in Port Adelaide and Elizabeth.

STAFFING

The typical staffing pattern in South Australian Pre-Schools (both kindergartens and child/parent centres) is for one or two trained staff working with an aide/assistant. Pre-schools with Aboriginal children are staffed with one or more trained white teachers, sometimes also with a white teacher aide. In addition to normal staffing entitlements, Aboriginal assistants and teacher aides, funded by D.A.A., are employed in many pre-schools. At present the Kindergarten Union employs 13 such Aboriginal Assistants. The role of the Aboriginal Assistant generally extends beyond that of a typical teacher aide in a kindergarten. Thus, the Aboriginal Assistants are expected to participate in preparation of materials and cleaning as for normal aides, but in addition, they are expected to be involved in the teaching program and to act as a liaison person with the local Aboriginal community.

All Aboriginal schools in the Education Department have one or two Aboriginal Assistants working in the pre-school. Fran Bailey (Adviser, Early Childhood Education, Education Department) described their role as various: at times they are almost the teacher, for example, when a teacher is appointed to a tribal school and is not very fluent in Pitjantjatjara. Invariably, Aboriginal Assistants participate in the planning of the program and they act as a liaison between the child/ parent centre and the Aboriginal community. As well, they interpret the Aboriginal culture for the teacher.

None of the Aboriginal assistants in the Education Department has formal qualifications. They receive their training on the job and via extensive in-service programs conducted by the Education Department. In 1980 and again in 1982, the Education Department will employ an Officer whose role is to help train Aboriginal Assistants.

The training of Aboriginal Assistants became the main focus of Penny's (1977) report to the K.U. Although he was mainly concerned to increase levels of participation by Aboriginal children, Penny believed that the most likely way of increasing the use of pre-school services and improving the quality of pre-school services for Aboriginal children was to train Aboriginal staff.

At the time of writing (1977) Penny noted that the K.U. employed 16 Aboriginal Assistants, "none of whom is professionally qualified or has reached at school the level required for entry to a college of Advanced Education". (74) (Since then two Aborigines have completed their Diploma in Teaching (E.C.E.) at Kingston College of Advanced Education). Aboriginal training and staffing of pre-schools became of central concern to Penny in his report and was taken up by the Kindergarten Union. A training program supported by the D.A.A. and Commonwealth Department of Education was then devised and is presently in operation. Aspects of Penny's report and the training program devised as a consequence will now be described.

Penny's recommendations were influenced by the conclusions of an Aboriginal Consultative Group who reported to the Commonwealth Government in 1975 on "Education for Aborigines". He quotes four of its conclusions that seemed to have an impact on his recommendations: (75)

> (i) Pre-schooling has been recognised as a most important part of the education of an Aboriginal child (p.12);
>
> (ii) Aboriginal people should be involved in their own education at all levels ... and be responsible for and have some realistic control of this process (Preface);
>
> (iii) We oppose the appointment of unqualified Aboriginal staff (p,22);

(iv) The end point qualifications of Aboriginal teachers should be at an equivalent level to that required of non-Aboriginal teachers in Australia (p.19).

The K.U. accepted Penny's recommendation for training the Aboriginal women in its employ and initiated a program designed to assist Aborigines (both female and male) to qualify professionally for employment in the Early Childhood workforce (76,77). A joint submission to the D.A.A. and O.C.C. led to funding for a Field Officer (Training) "whose main task was to organise, take part in and co-ordinate the training in the field of the (Aboriginal) assistants, and to provide for tutorials and curriculum equipment". (78) The program is funded for a maximum of 20 students working in pre-schools at Ceduna, Port Lincoln and Port Augusta. Following the recommendations of Penny, the program has various levels. At the lowest level a student may receive a Certificate of Competence from the K.U. This is not a professional qualification, but is at least a reference for a student who could be seeking employment. At the next level students may complete a Child Care Studies Certificate from a College of Further Education. Two Aboriginal students are at present participating in studies towards the Child Care Certificate. The third level is the Diploma in Teaching (E.C.E.) awarded by Hartley C.A.E. The majority of students are intending to or are presently working towards the Diploma in Teaching although the program has not been going long enough for any student yet to complete the program, although six students are presently (1981) more than half way toward the completion of the Diploma.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs funds the K.U. for tutors in the program, including the salary of the Field Officer (Training). The Commonwealth Department of Education supports the students financially via their Aboriginal Study Scheme and also pays for additional tutoring which students may need, e.g. bridging courses or to improve study skills. Hartley C.A.E. also contributes to the program in the sense that their early childhood staff have been required to produce "external-type" notes on their courses for the Aboriginal students. Interest and involvement from K.U. personnel, especially the Director (Professional Services), Dr M. O'Neill, has also been a factor in the success and continuance of the program.

Entry to the program is based on assessments of competence, motivation, study skills etc. by the Director (Professional Services) and the Field Officer (Training). In addition, the potential students need to satisfy normal entry requirements to Hartley C.A.E. The course content provided by Hartley C.A.E. adheres closely to that provided for other students in the Diploma of Teaching (E.C.E.) As a consequence, the Aboriginal students are receiving training that should qualify them to teach in any area of early childhood education.

Although there is much to commend in the program, there are clearly aspects of it that could benefit from improvement. One such feature concerns the way teaching materials for students are prepared by staff at Hartley C.A.E. To be fair to the staff, they have undertaken to provide correspondence type materials from their courses over and above already considerable teaching loads. They have done so with virtually no extra assistance and guidance in the preparation of correspondence materials.

Six of the 16 Aborigines who were employed as assistants in 1976 joined the training program and three of these changed to the status of student, thus leaving about 13 Aborigines presently employed in K.U. kindergartens as assistants. Those who changed to "student" are required by the conditions of their Commonwealth Department of Education grant to spend 18-19 hours per week in contact time associated with their course. Field study as a subject allows them time for work in pre-schools. Without exception, the Aboriginal assistants and students work in kindergartens with Aboriginal enrolments.

In terms of the goal of having fully qualified Aborigines working in early childhood programs, whether as assistants or teachers, many positive steps have clearly been taken in South Australia. Nevertheless, few would deny the goal is still a considerable distance away. The positive features of the training program conducted by the K.U. and Hartley C.A.E. are undoubted and the initiative taken in setting up this unique program should be commended. However, there is also no question of this program alone satisfying all the training needs of Aborigines wishing to work in the field of early childhood and hence needs to be supplemented by alternative types of training programs.

Part of the impetus for employing Aborigines in early childhood programs has come from Aborigines themselves. But, Aboriginal involvement in the management and conduct of their own education has also been Commonwealth Government policy. One of the reasons often given for the employment of Aborigines is that they may mediate between the Aboriginal community and the essentially "white-run" school system, or as O'Neill (79) says: "provide another kind of link between cultures". At least in South Australia, and for most K.U. kindergartens, the:

> Aboriginal aides are of necessity towns-people, or at least long established mission dwellers. They are also necessarily fluent in English, and will have spent considerable time in white schools. Many are frequently not bi-lingual and they are heterogeneous in respect of their Aboriginality. The links they have provided, therefore, have at best been tenuous, for they are not commonly regarded as leaders in the society, nor do they see themselves in this light. (80)

O'Neill here raises questions about the potential role of Aboriginal aides within the context of the present system of pre-schooling and the present training of Aboriginal staff. They may not need to be "leaders" or even members of the local Aboriginal community, but certainly their success is contingent on their being accepted by that communuty. The training program conducted by the K.U. and Hartley C.A.E. is preparing the Aboriginal students to be qualified pre-school teachers. However, if these same persons are also to fulfil the role outlined by Bourke (see earlier discussion of Aboriginal Pre-School Assistants' Scheme in Victoria) of attempting "to promote a common feeling of Aboriginality among all the descendants of the indigenous people of Australia ...", then, as Bourke suggests, some may need to undertake additional or different training from that provided in a program such as the Diploma of Teaching (E.C.E.) at Hartley C.A.E.

Both the K.U. and the Education Department maintain significant advisory services to support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff involved in pre-school provisions for Aborigines. In the K.U., the chief person responsible for advising staff on teaching programs for Aboriginal children is Ms G. Palmer, the Field Officer (Training) for Aboriginal children. As already noted, her main responsibility is for the Aboriginal students enrolled in the Aboriginal Training Program. This means her main contact is with kindergartens where the students are working. Of course, this means she is advising staff responsible for a fair proportion of Aboriginal children in South Australian kindergartens. It also means that the majority of kindergartens with some Aboriginal children (i.e. 1-5 enrolments) have little or no direct contact with advisory staff responsible for Aboriginal children. Nevertheless, all staff have access to any inservice programs or materials dealing with Aboriginal children. However, in view of the previously noted claims by most teachers that their training has been inadequate in the area of teaching ethnic minorities, it seems there is scope for greater attention to be given to providing guidance in some form to the large numbers of staff who have small numbers of Aboriginal children enrolled. As Crohn (81) concluded, "... in the long run, more adequate training of teachers to deal with both Aboriginal children and families seems necessary".

In the Education Department a position of Adviser, Early Childhood Education for Aboriginal Pre-Schools has been funded by the Children's Services Program via the C.S.C. That position is held by Mrs F. Bailey. Apart from the individual contact with each of the pre-schools in the Education Department with Aboriginal children, one of her major contributions has been the in-service workshops and seminars she has been able to organise for all staff (Aboriginal and white). Often the workshops are conducted in both English and Pitjantjatjara. During 1980 and 1981 they have included workshops on Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), the Aboriginal Family Education Centre (AFEC) program of A. Grey, Parent Education, Tribal and Non-tribal Aboriginal schools, and Aboriginal Non-tribal schools. (82,83,84,85,86,87,88). These workshops seem to be a positive feature of the Education Department in supporting and training staff as well as attempting to improve the early childhood programs offered in their pre-schools. They continue the in-service programs which have been a feature of the Aboriginal and Isolated Education section of the Education Department. Many valuable curriculum materials have been developed as a result of the in-service work.

In addition to Fran Bailey, it also needs to be noted that for 1982 Mr R. Lines will be appointed in the Education Department to act as a trainer for Aboriginal assistants. The training of Aboriginal school assistants is another area that the Education Department has given special attention to in recent years, e.g. via conferences, workshops etc.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ISSUES

An obvious feature of Aboriginal pre-schooling in South Australia has been the success of the Alberton Aboriginal Kindergarten which was established by Aborigines mainly for Aborigines. It is widely regarded in positive terms in the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. One possible area of future development is to follow the A.E.F. recommendation to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (89) that similar centres be established in areas of high Aboriginal population.

In view of the success of the A.E.F. in its liaison role, another possible area for future development is that of further liaison persons whose task would be to mediate between the Aboriginal community and existing pre-school facilities. Wundersitz (90) suggests that specialised personnel need to be employed for this role rather than existing staff working in such facilities. In support of this belief she says:

> To function successfully, such personnel require in-depth knowledge of, and must gain the acceptance and trust of the Aboriginal community. Both aspects require considerable time - a commodity not readily available to those staff (such as kindergarten teachers) already fully engaged in coping with the day-to-day running of the service facilities. Just to locate and keep track of Aboriginal families is in itself extremely time consuming ...

Another point that must be clear from any review of the literature on pre-schooling for Aboriginal children and the present discussion of South Australia, is that there is no simple or single answer to present difficulties and inadequacies. This is apparent from Watts and Henry's (91) analysis of reasons for low Aboriginal participation in early childhood services in urban areas that became the focus of Crohn's study in Elizabeth. Watts and Henry list "positive" reasons why Aboriginal parents may have decided not to use existing services, e.g. the goals expressed by the services are incompatible with their own child-rearing goals and/or they prefer to affirm their Aboriginal identity. Presumably the establishment of Aboriginal pre-schools (such as Alberton) would be an "answer" for many Aboriginal parents with such "positive" reasons.

Under "negative" reasons for not participating, Watts and Henry list factors like distance and poor transport; their shyness or perceived cultural exclusion; they are unaware of potential benefits; they are not, in general, oriented to being consumer participants. Liaison services such as A.E.F. seem able to overcome many or most of these "negative" reasons. The "answer/s" therefore, may differ from one sector or group within the Aboriginal community to another. The analysis of the situation for urban Aborigines that was the focus of much of the discussion of South Australia provides some idea of areas for future developments in the urban situation of Adelaide. It does not necessarily apply to Aboriginal pre-schooling in Aboriginal schools of the Education Department.

Both Fran Bailey and John Coker (92) from the Education Department identify the funding basis of Aboriginal pre-schooling as an issue. Their comments on and criticisms of present funding policies and their beliefs about levels of funding needed partly reflect the kinds of situations in which the Education Department conducts its pre-schools.

By-and-large (and with some flexibility) Education Department pre-schools, like kindergartens, are funded as if they are running educational sessions for children from about the age of 3 and a half to 5 years. In fact, the function of the pre-school and its staff extends much beyond sessional programs. As Coker (93) says:

> Gaining the Aboriginal community's confidence is a sensitive process. To support families in their role of educators, to learn from them and to help them to see the learning possibilities at hand which they may exploit for their children's benefit, requires patience and time. It is crucial that the teacher's activities are not restricted to the child/parent centre building. The teacher needs to be seen participating in the community's life in ways appropriate to individual communities.
>
> In a traditional community, working in the camp with families and children, home visits, watching the making of artifacts or the preparation of bush foods may contribute to the growth of understanding. It should be noted that the families' lack of English language and the teachers' lack of Pitjantjatjara slows effective communication between home and school.

The concern of the Education Department is that in order to function as they believe their pre-schools should, they need to be funded so they can be staffed to enable staff to engage in activities beyond sessional pre-school and with children outside the 3 and a half to 5 year age range. Modifications to programs in this way face funding difficulties because they do not fit standard programs and funding guidelines.

The issue of funding raises questions about how Aboriginal early childhood programs should be conceived (and hence on what basis they are funded). If they are to provide a family education and support service for children and parents in all areas of health, education and welfare from the ages of 0-5 years (as Coker argues) then clearly they should be funded on a different basis than if they are to run sessional educational programs in preparation for school for children aged 4 years.

Some of the needs for more generous staffing entitlements in Aboriginal pre-schools as argued by Coker relate directly to the fact that the teacher in the situation is usually someone alien to the local environment, Aboriginal culture, local community and the Pitjantjatjara language. This raises the question of whether the same needs would apply if the pre-schools were fully staffed by Aborigines.

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SUMMARY TABLE: SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Administration	Pre-school programs for Aborigines are provided by two different organisations, the Kindergarten Union (KU), and the S.A. Department of Education (DE). A third organisation, the Childhood Services Council, has overall responsibility for the education, care, welfare and health services for all young children in the State.
Age of Admission	The K.U. generally provides a one-year program of sessional (i.e., half-day) pre-school for children between the ages of 4 and 5. The policy of the D.E. is more flexible, with most children entering during their third year.
Funding	Both organisations are funded by Commonwealth and State grants distributed by the Childhood Services Council. The proportion of Commonwealth support (currently between 25 and 30 percent) is decreasing. Additionally, however, the D.A.A. funds the employment of Aboriginal assistants in all D.E. Aboriginal pre-schools.
Aims and Philosophies	In K.U. pre-schools with substantial Aboriginal enrolments, the aims are basically similar to all other pre-schools, although Aboriginal stories, songs and knowledge may be taught. Many of the D.E. centres are in more tribally oriented settings and have developed bilingual-bicultural programs emphasising parental involvement.
Enrolments	In 1981 approximately 150 Aboriginal children (predominantly 4-year-olds) were enrolled in 45 K.U. pre-schools. At the same time there were just over 200 children attending D.E. pre-schools, the majority (186) in centres attached to 13 schools with an exclusive or predominant Aboriginal enrolment.
Participation Rates	In D.E. centres the situation apparently is variable, ranging from a low of 50 percent to "almost all" of the eligible children. In those metropolitan and country areas served by the K.U. impressionistic reports suggest that rates may vary between 30 and 65 percent of 4-year-old children.
Staffing	The typical pattern in both types of pre-school is for one or two trained white staff, plus an assistant. In 13 K.U. pre-schools, an additional Aboriginal assistant is employed, their salaries being paid by D.A.A. In D.E. pre-schools the assistants generally are Aborigines, and often two are employed. The K.U. has initiated a training program for Aborigines in conjunction with Hartley C.A.E. and funded by D.A.A.

CHAPTER 9

TASMANIA

Tasmania has a small but significant Aboriginal population. According to Randriamahefa (1) the 1971 census gave a total of 671 Tasmanian Agorigines while in the 1976 census the number was 2,942. Nevertheless, it has been estimated that there may be up to 5,000 Aborigines living in Tasmania (2). A major difficulty faced by Aborigines in Tasmania is the view among State Government Departments and within much of the population at large "that there were no Aborigines on mainland Tasmania and even if there were then their needs were no different to those of the rest of the community". (3)

The small number of Aboriginal children in Tasmania necessarily means limited pre-school provisions. Responsibility for pre-school education falls to the Education Department which will be the main focus of attention here. In addition some independent initiatives by Aborigines will be discussed.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The policy of the Education Department is to integrate Aboriginal children into ordinary schools. Cape Barren Island is the only school with a predominantly Aboriginal population and it employs a part-time teacher to run a pre-school program. The State Government Policy is to provide free pre-school education for four-year-olds within the school system.

Both Randriamahefa and Sculthorpe (4) are critical of Education Department policies for Aboriginal Education. Aboriginal Education is administered by the Special Education section of the department.

> The Department's policy has been to fully integrate Aboriginal children into the existing state school system and no specific State funds have been set aside for Aboriginal Education. Funds provided by the Commonwealth (DAA) have been used primarily to help finance the primary school on Cape Barren Island, where the majority of the children are Aboriginal. (5)

Sculthorpe (6) describes the overall picture as one in which

> Aboriginal education in Tasmania has suffered from a lack of co-ordination, initiative and imagination. The Education Department does not have a superintendent of Aboriginal Education as do all the other States. Aboriginal education is a very minor part of the responsibilities of the superintendent of Special Education who is concerned with the

education of children requiring special attention including the physically and mentally handicapped and gifted children.

Because Aboriginal children are integrated into normal schools, the Education Department claimed "it would be extremely difficult to identify pre-school provisions for Aboriginal children in this State." For this reason it is impossible to identify numbers of Aboriginal children attending pre-schools. Apart from numbers, however, there is the question of the type of pre-schooling that is available to Aboriginal children. It is on this question that Aboriginal communities in Tasmania have been quite definite. Thus Padmore and Nicholson (7) said:

> Due to lack of funds, Aboriginal pre-schools are not available for Aboriginal children in Tasmania. Our Aboriginal children have to attend European pre-schools and be taught by European pre-school teachers.

Padmore and Nicholson, (8) along with Randriamahefa (9) and Sculthorpe (10), discuss the issue of Aboriginal identity as a critical factor in the development of Aboriginal children, and they criticise Education Department programs for their failure to recognise and attempt to enhance Aboriginal identity. Thus Padmore and Nicholson say: "Our children face a major identity crisis whilst trying to cope within the European school system. This is particularly crucial in the early childhood years".

Apart from Aboriginal identity, recommendations from Aboriginal groups for Aboriginal pre-schools have been based on:

(a) the need for pre-school assistance to Aboriginal children to help them cope with subsequent schooling and reduce failure and the dropout rate in later years, and

(b) Aboriginal health problems, especially in young children, and the belief that early childhood services may be associated with greater attention to and help for such problems.

ABORIGINAL INITIATIVES

Two Aboriginal initiatives in Tasmania have been associated with early childhood services. The first is the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc., an organisation formed in 1973 and funded by D.A.A. mainly to provide a Legal Service. But, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has found a need to provide a more extensive service as a referral and support agency in matters of Education, Housing and General Welfare. Membership of the Centre consists of any Aboriginal people who reside in Tasmania, and among the objectives (11) of the Centre are "To institute and maintain educational facilities for the benefit of persons of Aboriginal descent" and "To promote and further the interests of the individual Aborigine and the Aboriginal race". At present the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre operates four separate programs: Legal Aid, Health and Alcohol, Family Support and a Playgroup. The last two involve early childhood services. The Family Support Program is funded by the Office of Child Care, while a "one-off" grant for the playgroup has been received from the International Year of the Child for 1981.

The Family Support Program included in its activities work that directly or indirectly involved assistance to pre-school children, e.g. child minding was provided, and at times the program dealt with matters of child neglect, runaway children and seeing that children had basic clothing, as well as giving advice on parenting matters such as discipline and the physical and psychological requirements of young children.

The playgroup has 30 children attending in two groups of 15. It is run by a co-ordinator and 2 aides with parent involvement. Classes on nutrition are held for the mothers, and health and dental checks as well as remedial assessments are done on each child that attends the playgroup.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Child Care Association (TACCA) at the moment has not received funds for operation and is currently limited mainly to a volunteer service with Aboriginal children in the Launceston area.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ISSUES

Issues in Aboriginal pre-school education in Tasmania relate closely to issues associated with Aboriginal education in general. These issues seem to be associated with the need for a recognition of the existence and needs of the Aboriginal community together with the development of a policy towards Aboriginal education and the allocation of funds for special provisions in Aboriginal education.

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SUMMARY TABLE: TASMANIA

Administration	Responsibility for pre-school education falls exclusively upon the State Department of Education.
Age of admission	Free pre-schooling is provided for all four-year-olds.
Funding	Aboriginal children are fully integrated into existing state pre-schools and no state funds are specifically allocated for Aboriginal education. Commonwealth support (via DAA) helps finance one school (Cape Barren Island) where the majority of pupils are of Aboriginal descent.
Aims and Philosophies	Due to the policy of integration no special provisions are made for Aborigines.
Enrolments	No data are available, although numbers apparently are small (the total Aboriginal population of Tasmania is between 3,000 and 5,000).
Participation Rates	No information is available.
Staffing	No special provisions are made.
Aboriginal Initiatives	Two community based organisations are providing child care support, and one runs a playgroup of approximately 30 children.

CHAPTER 10

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia has an Aboriginal population of about 26,000 scattered over the vast area of the state. It has one of the more comprehensively developed pre-school systems for Aboriginal children. Children in Western Australia may enter school in the year they turn six and the state has a policy of providing free and non-compulsory pre-school education to five-year-olds.

The Western Australian Department of Education has held the main responsibility for pre-school services since January 1978 when the Early Childhood Branch of the Education Department was formed. This resulted from an amalgamation of the Western Australian Pre-school Board and the pre-primary section of the Education Department. At that time the Education Department conducted pre-primary classes while pre-schools were run under the auspices of the Pre-school Board. Parent committees for the pre-schools were able to choose between transferring to the Education Department or remaining "independent". Even for independent pre-schools though, the State was responsible for providing salaries for teachers and aides. At March 1981 the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Early Childhood Association (1) listed 442 Government Pre-primary centres (which includes those that transferred), 164 pre-school centres that remained "independent", 29 Aboriginal pre-pre-schools and 67 independent non-government pre-school centres.

In addition to the Education Department, pre-school services are also provided by the Department for Community Welfare (DCW) who are responsible for Day Care facilities (see Chapter). Finally, the Save the Children Fund also has a small involvement in pre-schools for Aborigines in W.A.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF W.A.

OVERVIEW

The Education Department of W.A., via Pre-primary Centres, Pre-school Centres and Aboriginal pre-schools, has the main responsibility for early childhood services in W.A. The W.A. Early Childhood Association (1981) gives a figure of 24,735 children enrolled in early childhood facilities in W.A., with all but 1986 of these enrolled in Government pre-primary, pre-pre-school or pre-school centres. Education Department statistics for 1981 showed 1020 Aboriginal children in pre-schools (including pre-pre-schools) and 582 in pre-primary centres. In addition there were about 125 Aboriginal children in independent, non-government pre-schools.

Within the Education Department, Aboriginal pre-school children are catered for by the Aboriginal Education Division of the Early Childhood Branch. A recent policy document (2) on "Aboriginal Children" from the Aboriginal Education Division describes the current pre-school scheme for Aboriginal children as having been initiated in 1971 by the W.A. Pre-school Board, but is now included in the responsibilities of the Early Childhood Branch of the W.A. Education Department. The policy described in the document said the aim of suitable early childhood education for Aboriginal or part-Aboriginal children was met by:

1. Planning centres and programs to suit all the different types of Aboriginal children, e.g. fringe-dwellers, town-dwellers, part-tribal people.

2. Using flexible programs based on the present extensive knowledge of pre-school education and Child Development.

3. Investigating present research into Aboriginal education for pre-school children with the aim of continually adding to the present knowledge.

The general plan for implementing the policy was described as having three elements:

A. Extend existing facilities: to Aboriginal reserves, missions and other country areas.

B. Arrange a 3-4 year program over the years from 2 to about 6. This was to include a sequence involving the following:

    1. Pre-pre-school groups wherever the children live, including young children and their mothers.

    2. Pre-pre-school groups (transition groups) in approved centres incorporating children, teachers and mothers.

    3. Integrated groups in pre-school or pre-primary centres for children in their immediate pre-school year, i.e. the year in which they turn five, and

    4. If necessary, one extra year at a pre-school or pre-primary centre for children who are still not ready for formal situations in school and

C. Foster a closer liaison with Community Health Department, Department of Community Welfare, Adult Education, and all appropriate Commonwealth Departments. (Children's Services Program).

Funding

Funds for pre-school education for five-year-olds are provided by Commonwealth and State Governments. For Aboriginal children, additional money for pre-schooling and pre-pre-schooling comes from the D.A.A. who provide a small block grant and fund individual programs and services based on submissions. Pre-School Centre fees if levied are paid by the Department of Community Welfare for Aboriginal children attending approved centres.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

The Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA) (3) claimed there were over 24,000 children turning 5 years of age in 1981 in Early Childhood Centres in W.A. This was about 86 percent of the total population of 5 year olds. Pre-Primary Centres are restricted to taking children in the year they turn 5, but pre-schools are able to enrol younger children subject to their keeping to certain staffing policies. The A.E.C.A. figures for 1981 show over 19,000 children aged 5 years and older in early childhood education, most of whom (13,000) were in Government Pre-Primary Centres, while 5,346 were shown as being aged 4 years and younger, most of whom (3,233) were in pre-school centres (including pre-pre-schools). Their figures back to 1977 reveal a fairly stable overall total of children in early childhood education in W.A. at about 24,000.

The regional enrolments of Aboriginal children in pre-schools (including pre-pre-schools) and pre-primary centres are given in Table 4. It can be seen that all Regions have some Aboriginal pre-school children but that the largest numbers are in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Geraldton Regions with a substantial number also in the Metropolitan area if all four metropolitan regions are combined. An inspection of enrolment figures for individual pre-pre-schools, pre-schools and pre-primary centres showed many (15-20) Centres with substantial Aboriginal enrolments (e.g. from about 15-60 enrolments) and an even larger number of centres with small enrolments of Aboriginal children (5 or fewer). Programs offered in pre-pre-schools, pre-schools and pre-primary centres are sessional in nature rather than full-day. Children in pre-pre-schools usually come for about 2-3 sessions per week, while children in pre-primary centres typically attend four sessions per week.

Included in the pre-school services offered by the Aboriginal Pre-School Division of the Education Department are six mobile pre-school units, where teachers travel in four-wheel-drive vehicles out into isolated areas and visit groups of children on stations and in Aboriginal communities.

TABLE 4

NUMBERS OF ABORIGINAL PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN BY REGION

	Pre-School & Pre-Pre-Schools	Pre-Primary	Total
Metro South East	51	24	75
Metro South West	42	8	50
Metro North East	87	30	117
Metro North West	14	5	19
Upper Great Southern	73	28	101
Great Southern	36	24	60
South West	46	16	62
Midlands	32	21	53
Geraldton	96	124	220
Goldfields	77	86	163
Pilbara	85	126	211
Kimberley	380	68	448
Gilgam	1	22	23

The statement on "Aboriginal Children" (4) from the Aboriginal Education Division of the W.A. Education Department describes some elements of the pre-pre-school programs. Clearly, these programs are to be flexible and to involve the Aboriginal community and parents as much as possible. They are seen as "the first step in the transition from home into the community" and involve children from 2-4 years of age. The "building" for such pre-pre-school programs "could range from a tree or bough shelter on a reserve in the North to a conventional small kindergarten building or adapted State Housing home in an urban area, with many variations in between". One of the priorities of pre-pre-school groups:

> is to involve the Aboriginal adults in the program ... where possible the requests from Aboriginal groups should be followed as long as we are satisfied that the children will benefit from the pre-school experience planned. We should be prepared to accept groups at the level at which they are operating and help them to gradually up grade their centre.

The Aboriginal Education Division also says that:

> A pre-pre-school group should always have a large majority of Aboriginal children to ensure that both children and parents have an opportunity to build up confidence before moving on to a larger integrated group situation.

Not only is involvement of Aboriginal parents seen as critical in pre-pre-school groups, but involvement of Aborigines as staff is also important. In 1975 Dunn said in the Annual Report of the Aboriginal Education Departmentof the then W.A. Pre-School Board (5) "We hope in the future that more and more Aboriginal staff will be in charge of their own pre-pre groups". Jones (6) also commented on this:

> We have found that inclusion of the Aboriginal people is essential for success of pre-school education. Today our most successful centres are the pre-pre-school groups on reserves in country areas, where Aboriginal fathers have put up shelters and equipment sheds, helped with simple building projects and made some of the equipment. Mothers and grandmothers have helped the teachers cook and serve midday meals for the children, and where Aboriginal assistants and teachers are employed on the pre-school centre and help to train Aboriginal girls as aides.

The second stage in the 3-4 year program for Aboriginal early childhood education involves pre-pre-school groups in approved pre-school or pre-primary centres. Again mothers and Aboriginal staff involvement is seen as essential. (7)

The third stage in the 3-4 year program involves integrated groups in pre-school or pre-primary centres. These "groups cater for older children, that is, children who are in the fifth year". (8) The integrated groups are seen as the final stage, where the child is prepared for grade 1 at school. In the Education Circular, February 1978, the Early Childhood Branch of the Education Department described pre-primary centres as follows:

> This informal year of education is linked with the planning of year 1, where the year 1 teacher and the pre-primary teacher undertake a close working relationship to improve the continuity of the early education of children. (9)

In addition to integrating Aboriginal children with other children who will be entering Year 1, the provision of early childhood education for Aboriginal children is also integrated with other services. Hence most of the services of pre-school Aboriginal education ... "have their headquarters in a small building, adjacent to the Early Childhood Branch of the Education Department. This building has been adapted to create an environment that is relevant to Aboriginal people. Some of the services it is used for are:

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1. Provision of information about pre-school Aboriginal Education.
2. Enquiries about employment opportunities in pre-school Aboriginal Education.
3. Advisory services - including in-service workshop and program development.
4. Assessing and making equipment suitable for Aboriginal children.
5. The administration of the Basic Child Care Course" (10)

The Basic Child Care Course is a training course for people of Aboriginal descent who are employed in pre-school or day care centres.

The W.A. "Aboriginal Committees on Education" Report on Aboriginal Education within the Education Department of Western Australia to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference 1981 (11) said that as yet there are no set bi-lingual programs as in the Northern Territory. But added: "The language used in each centre varies according to the children's home environment, e.g. children at Warburton speak their own Aboriginal language" and "we are encouraging the use of the children's own language".

Language was also a problem faced by Jill Churnside (12) in her pre-school at Jigalong. She explained that the children came to the pre-school with little or no knowledge of English. Her solution was to use a mixture of languages, her own, English, and the children's, but with an increasing use of English so that by the time the children began school they can understand English.

The Education Department also runs a small (i.e. in a few schools) "Bridging Program", described in a Document "Aboriginal Education in Western Australia", (13) as "an alternative program of early childhood education". It is provided to children in their first year of school and represents an attempt to bridge the transition from pre-school to the traditionally more formal system of primary education. The program is described as attempting to meet the child at his own point of development and to be more child-centred than teacher-centred by providing a flexible environment in which the child can grow and develop at his own rate.

PARTICIPATION RATES

No formal statistics on participation rates are maintained by the Education Department, However, the impression given by Officers of the Department was that the overall enrolment rate of Aboriginal children especially children aged 5 years, was fairly high, possibly about 75 percent. As with other states, however, participation varied, with three of the factors identified as influencing participation being:

(a) The personality, abilities and attitudes of the white and Aboriginal staff;

(b) the availability of transport, with non-availability of transport having the potential to decrease attendance dramatically, and

(c) whether or not the pre-school is mainly Aboriginal - often when children move up to a pre-school or pre-primary from a pre-pre-school which is fully Aboriginal, they are in a situation where the Aborigines are in the minority, and sometimes the attendance rate drops.

STAFFING

Pre-pre-schools, pre-schools and pre-primary centres are typically staffed with a white teacher as the teacher in charge. In about six of the pre-pre-schools, Aborigines fully staff the centre. In other pre-pre-schools Aboriginal assistants are employed. In pre-schools and pre-primary centres a number of Aboriginal aides are employed, some as the "normal" aide and many others as supplementary staff (supported by D.A.A. funds). There are about 50 Aboriginal aides employed by the Education Department of W.A., but only some of these work in pre-schools or pre-primary centres.

The Aboriginal Education Branch of the W.A. Education Department describes the role of Aboriginal Teacher Aides as three fold: (a) a para-professional role of being more able than European teachers to communicate with Aboriginal students, particularly young ones and of understanding 'Aboriginality'; (b) carrying out non-interactive duties so that the teacher may concentrate on the professional aspects of teaching, and (c) providing a bridge between the school and community, the teacher and the parent. The Aboriginal Education Branch also indicated that:

> School Principals and teachers with whom aides will work are ... largely responsible for the structuring and implementing of training programs for their aides. Guidelines relating to selection, duties, classification and training are available to schools. During 1981 a series of in-service courses will be held for teacher aides and school administration. (14)

For Aboriginal aides employed in the Early Childhood Branch of the Aboriginal Education Division substantial training provisions are available. Some of these aides are employed as supernumeraries and participate in the Aboriginal trainee scheme supported by Commonwealth Funds. The trainees receive initial on-the-job work experience in a pre-school (or pre-pre-school) or pre-primary centre, lasting for about a year. After this time they may apply either to become a permanent aide employed under normal aide conditions or enter the Basic Child Care Course.

The Basic Child Care Course is a training course designed to cater for the varying needs of students from a wide range of localities and with differing educational and social experiences. The course lasts a minimum of one year and covers three units of work with each unit including:

> A two week block period of intensive instruction and experience at a residential regional centre. The remaining time of the unit is spent receiving practical instruction and carrying out assignments, in the pre-school or day care centre in which the student is employed. (15)

The only entry requirement is that the applicant have worked in a pre-school or day care centre for not less than 1 term. The general aims of the Basic Child Care Course were listed as follows:

* To provide training in basic child care to people of Aboriginal descent.
* To encourage self-reliance and give experience in communication.
* To show the importance of health care and good nutrition.
* To demonstrate skills in working with pre-school children.
* To give opportunity for employment.
* To identify the value of the indigenous culture and language in the care and education of Aboriginal children.

ABORIGINAL INITIATIVES: STRELLEY

The independent school developed by the Aboriginal community at Strelley is an example of an Aboriginal initiative to provide education to its people. The school covers all ages, including pre-school.

Strelley is a community of over 600 Nyangumanta, Mantjiltjarra and Kukatja speaking Aborigines in the north-west of W.A. It is a highly traditionally oriented community which has achieved economic and social independence partly through its operation of a number of pastoral stations near Port Hedland. McConnochie (16) claims the community "is determined to maintain a modified but distinctive Aboriginal culture within the broader economic and political structures of Australian society". The Strelley community rigorously opposed the provision of a State school, believing such schools would threaten the survival of the group and its traditional culture. In 1975 the Strelley community obtained funds to develop its own school which is based on traditional community structures, but recognises the need for literacy and numeracy.

Liberman (17) has described the school and makes the following points. All classes are held in the three main camps and are held outdoors or under tin shelters with the pupils and teachers (one European and one Aboriginal per class) sitting on woollen blankets in circles in traditional Aboriginal fashion. The school is governed by an all-Aboriginal Board which has control of staffing, curriculum and allocation of students, which ensures that teaching is consistent with the Aboriginal traditions of the community.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ISSUES

The W.A. Aboriginal Committees on Education Report to the N.A.E.C. Annual Conference 1981 (18) identified several issues and areas for future development. They very largely relate to more Aboriginal involvement, control and responsibility in early childhood services. Thus, they see a need for more participation and decision making by Aboriginal people in early childhood education. To achieve this, they recognise that Aborigines must move beyond their present support/assistant type positions to positions where they have control and responsibility either in teaching or advisory positions. This will require more Aborigines with formal qualifications beyond the Basic Child Care Course and they argue there should be more "opportunities for Aboriginal people to gain special entry to Tertiary institutions providing courses in Early Childhood Teaching". Lastly, they believe it is important that the level of parent involvement increase.

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SUMMARY TABLE: WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Administration	Most pre-schools are provided by the State Department of Education (D/E), and are referred to as pre-primary centres. About 25 are designated "independent" pre-schools as they are run by parent committees although staffing is fully funded by the D/E.
Age of Admission	Children in WA may enter school in the year they turn six and the state policy is to provide free pre-schooling for all 5-year-olds. The D/E also provides pre-pre-schools for Aboriginal children, thus allowing them to commence as young as two years of age.
Funding	Funds for pre-school education for 5-year-olds are provided from Commonwealth and State grants. Additional grants for Aboriginal pre-pre-schools come from the Commonwealth via DAA in the form of specific funds for individual programs.
Aims and Philosophies	Pre-pre-school programs for children aged 2 to 4 are flexible and seek extensive community and parental involvement. The primary goal is transition from home to community. Subsequent pre-school and pre-primary programs focus on the transition to formal schooling with stress on continuity of early education.
Enrolments	In 1981 there were 1602 Aboriginal children enrolled in D/E supported pre-pre-schools, pre-schools and pre-primary centres, with an additional 125 attending independent pre-schools.
Participation Rates	No formal statistics are available, although staff estimate that approximately 75% of 5-year-old Aborigines are enrolled in pre-schools and pre-primary centres. The pattern is variable across the state, however.
Staffing	The typical pattern for all types of early education facility is the employment of a trained white person as the teacher in charge. In 1981, however, six of the pre-pre-schools were fully staffed by Aborigines, and Aboriginal assistants were employed in the other pre-pre-schools. In pre-schools and pre-primary centres a number of Aboriginal aides are employed, some in a regular and others in a supplementary capacity.
Aboriginal Initiatives	The provision of Aboriginal controlled schooling (including pre-schooling) in the Strelley community is a particularly significant development.

CHAPTER 11

NEW SOUTH WALES

New South Wales had a total Aboriginal population of about 40,000 in the 1976 census, including about 1,300 children aged 4 years and about the same number aged 3 years. The Aboriginal population is distributed widely throughout the State but with substantial numbers in the major urban centres and in the north west of the State.

The N.S.W. Government policy is much more oriented to day care facilities for pre-school children of all ages than other State Governments where most attention seems to be given to sessional pre-school education in the year prior to school entry. N.S.W. also is "the only State without a policy of universal pre-school education". (1) Instead the Government encourages community-based centres, which are the responsibility of the Department of Youth and Community Services. The Department of Education has developed some pre-schools in areas of need, but in general the N.S.W. Government encourages community-based services rather than providing State services.

Services for Aboriginal pre-school children in N.S.W., as for pre-school children in general, are largely provided by community-based or private groups rather than in Government run facilities. These community/private groups are supported by Government funds (State and Commonwealth) and the process of funding, licensing etc. is carried out by the Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS). Y.A.C.S. administers Commonwealth funding through the D.A.A. as well as the O.C.C. Y.A.C.S. uses Government funds to subsidise the whole range of pre-school services for children including the various forms of day care and sessional pre-school. It does so for a wide range of community based or private groups including individual committees running a single centre, local government councils, the Kindergarten Union and S.C.F. Most of the services for Aboriginal pre-school children in N.S.W. can be described in some sense under the auspices of Y.A.C.S. The Department of Education also has a small role to play as well as the Family and Children's Service Agency (F.A.C.S.A.)

It is important to note before describing Y.A.C.S. and the Department of Education that a major element of early childhood services for Aboriginal children is not included here. This concerns the role of Aboriginal Family Education Centres (AFEC). The development of the A.F.E.C. movement in N.S.W. and its contribution to Aboriginal development and Aboriginal early childhood services has been described by Teasdale and Whitelaw (2) and by Watts (3).

Teasdale and Whitelaw note that in mid-1974 there were 12 A.F.E.C.'s in N.S.W. with between about 11 and 30 pre-school children of various ages attending each centre. Subsequent to 1974, Teasdale and Whitelaw say that an additional 12 centres were developed. In April 1978 members of the A.F.E.C. Federation, a fully independent all-Aboriginal organisation of A.F.E.C.'s, rejected financial support from Governments so as to maintain themselves as an autonomous and self-directed organisation.

Aborigines involved in A.F.E.C. claim that since 1978 A.F.E.C. has grown and strengthened as an Aboriginal movement. Many of them see it as a "way of life" rather than a set of activities carried out in a particular environment (e.g. a pre-school building) at particular times. They see it as a movement that operates in an Aboriginal way, on an Aboriginal time scale, in the direction that Aboriginal people want to go, and at the level each individual requires. As such, A.F.E.C.'s do not operate in formal ways and are not open to formal analyses and description, e.g. in terms of attendance, hours of operation, curriculum/program. For these reasons, only very rough estimates can be made of the numbers of Aboriginal children involved. At a minimum, however, it is likely that A.F.E.C.'s are making a substantial contribution to early childhood services for Aboriginal children in N.S.W. If the number of 24 A.F.E.C.'s in 1978 is taken, for example, with a mean of about 15 children (possibly a low estimate) in each centre, it can be seen that well over 350 Aboriginal pre-school children may be involved in A.F.E.C.'s. This is a significant number in comparison with numbers in State-run (Department of Education) or State subsidised (Y.A.C.S.) facilities.

THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

OVERVIEW

Almost all early childhood services in N.S.W. have dealings with the Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS) since it is responsible for licensing all non-Government pre-schools and child care centres, whether non-profit or commercial, as well as family day care minders. The Department of Y.A.C.S. administers government funds (State and Commonwealth) for early childhood services and advises the Government on such services and their development.

The Department of Y.A.C.S., in 1981, (4) moved to a Regional organisation with the State divided into ten regions, four in the Sydney metropolitan area and six in the country. In addition, the Department is divided into five Bureaux: Children's Bureau; Youth and Family Bureau; Handicapped Person's Bureau; Emergency Assistance Bureau; and Community Organisation Development Bureau. The "Early Childhood Services Division" is contained within the Children's Bureau and is responsible for policy development and implementation within the early childhood field.

Prior to 1981 the responsibility for Aboriginal early childhood facilities rested with the Minister for Youth and Community Services. In 1981, however, a new Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was created. At this point the role of the new Ministry in relation to early childhood facilities seems unclear. At present, policy and programs for Aborigines are the responsibility of the Special Services Division within the Department of Y.A.C.S. It seems likely the Special Services Division will retain some role in the delivery of services to Aborigines.

Funding

The "Second Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon Aborigines", in N.S.W., noted that State and Commonwealth Governments contributed to pre-school funding in N.S.W. It says:(5)

> For the year 1980/81 the Commonwealth Government (through the Office of Child Care) has allocated $7.1 million and the State Government (through the Department of Youth and Community Services) $8 million. The $7.1 million from the Commonwealth Department is divided between the Department of Youth and Community Services (Early Childhood Services) and the Department of Education, which receives about $900,000. The remainder of the cost of running its 56 pre-schools is met by the State Government through its Education funding.

The Department of Y.A.C.S. allocated funds to pre-school services in 1981/82 as follows:

(a) Subsidies were paid to 568 pre-schools offering sessional programs and a total budget of $14,716,000 was allocated to pre-schools. The subsidies are based on the number of children enrolled, with a base rate subsidy for all children and then additional subsidies paid for children from "economic need" families, or for children identified as handicapped or for disadvantaged migrant children. The State regards special Aboriginal funding as the province of the Commonwealth, hence does not specify separately, Aboriginal children as a disadvantaged group. Therefore, Aboriginal parents need to apply for the "economic need" subsidy in the same way as other families. Pre-schools need to charge fees as subsidies do not cover full salary and running costs.

(b) Subsidies were paid to 164 Long Day Care Centres (which operate for more than 8 hours per day for the full year) and a total of $1,450,000 was allocated for this purpose. This amount also included a subsidy for 38 Occasional Care Centres.

(c) A total of $1,100,000 was provided for Special Services, which covered five Toy Libraries, ten Mobile Resource Units, three Outreach Workers and seventeen Innovative Family Programs. Many of the Special Services have a substantial or significant involvement with Aboriginal children or families. For example, the Toy Library at Kempsey has had a gradual increase in involvement of Aboriginal families, as has the "Northern Roads Activity Van operating at Tingha". The "Toomelah Outreach Project for Aboriginal Families" was funded as a Special Service (and is described briefly below). The "Namoi Family Improvement Program" also has a significant Aboriginal involvement.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

Statistics provided by the Department of Y.A.C.S. based on collections in all licensed and subsidised pre-school centres in 1980 showed 882 Aboriginal children were attending Community Based pre-schools. (2 percent of children in these centres). This figure includes children attending Save the Children Fund (SCF) Centres, Kindergarten Union Centres and individual centres such as Murawina (described below). In addition, 69 Aboriginal children were attending Private Commercial Pre-Schools. A further 226 children were in various forms of day care (see Chapter 13). This provides a grand total of 1177 Aboriginal children in all types of pre-school facilities and constitutes 1.5 percent of all children in these facilities. In addition, many Aboriginal children attend Playgroups run in a co-operative way by parents. It is difficult to estimate the number of Playgroups for Aboriginal children. One operates for example at Tamworth and another at Gunnedah.

The Legislative Assembly Select Committee upon Aborigines (6) claimed:

> There are at present nearly 20 pre-school centres for Aboriginal children in N.S.W., and a number of other centres with a significant Aboriginal enrolment. In Sydney there are two Aboriginal community pre-schools, run by the Murawina Multi-purpose Aboriginal Education Centre, at Redfern and Mt. Druitt, which have 100% Aboriginal enrolment. Yawarra pre-school at Mt. Druitt also has a high Aboriginal enrolment, but is not wholly Aboriginal-run, as are the Murawina Centres. Some

> country pre-schools (e.g. Bourke and Collarenebri) have a 50 percent Aboriginal enrolment, and there is also a high Aboriginal enrolment in several North and South Coast centres.

It should be noted that the S.C.F. runs thirteen Aboriginal pre-schools. The Aboriginal Education Board estimated about 500 Aboriginal children attended S.C.F. pre-schools. Information from Regional Advisers in N.S.W. revealed a large number of pre-schools with an Aboriginal enrolment of less than 3 or 4.

The Council of Social Services of N.S.W. document "Scarce for Kids" gives numbers of places available to pre-school children in various types of service. Under the heading of "special features" it lists how many places are specifically funded for Aboriginal children. Their results, given for Local Government Areas rather than for individual Centres, are shown in Table 5. (7)

TABLE 5

FUNDED PLACES FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN SHOWN IN "SCARCE FOR KIDS"

Local Government Area	Places	Type of Service
Armidale/Dumaresq	25	sessional
Blacktown	25	full day
Bourke	24	sessional
Brewarrina	50	sessional
Central Darling	25	full day
Coffs Harbour	25	full day
Cowra	50	full day
Greater Taree	20	full day
Lachlan	25	sessional
Moree Plains	40	full day
Nambucca	50	full day
South Sydney	49	full day
Sydney	16	full day
Walgett	40	full day
Wellington	25	full day
Wentworth	18	full day
Total	507	

Two features are apparent from Table 5. The first is that the total number of children given is less than half the total given by the Department of Y.A.C.S. as being in pre-school facilities. There seems to be no obvious explanation for this discrepancy. The data in Table appear to severely under represent places available to Aboriginal children. The second feature of the Table is that all the places listed are for "full day" (i.e. 4 to 6 hours per day) or "sessional" programs. No places were given for Long Day Care despite the fact that the Department of Y.A.C.S. recorded 157 Aboriginal children in Long Day Care in 1980.

Aims and Orientation of the Programs, Curriculum etc.

It is apparent from the above overview of services that there is considerable diversity in the type of pre-school service available to Aboriginal children in N.S.W. A major factor in the diversity is the range of groups or organisations involved in the provision of services. This makes it impossible to make general statements about the curriculum or aims of the programs available. There are important differences between services that need to be noted. Thus, the structure, orientation and aims of the Murawina programs need to be contrasted with the approach of S.C.F. Centres. S.C.F. programs have been described in Chapter 11 and Murawina is described below. In the present section some general comments on pre-schooling in N.S.W. will be made and then some individual examples to illustrate the diversity that exists over and above differences between S.C.F. and Murawina.

In their description of "Pre-Schools", the Family and Children's Service Agency (8) notes that pre-schooling in N.S.W. was initiated some time prior to 1895 when the Kindergarten Union was formed to co-ordinate kindergartens already operating. They emphasise that pre-school programs are "directed at the social and educational development of children 3-5 years of age". They note that pre-schools operate on a sessional basis with a session lasting 2-3 hours or on an extended basis of 5-6 hours between 9am and 3.30pm. Children usually attend from 2 to 5 sessions per week and pre-schools typically run only during school terms. The number of children in any one group is about 20-25 children.

The literature on general pre-schooling in N.S.W. shows that, as with other States, the typical program can be described as "traditional" in its orientation and organisation. This is an important point for many Aboriginal children because it means that (as in other States) when one or two Aboriginal Children attend a local community based pre-school they will receive a program designed and conducted primarily for white and mainly middle class children. Comments from various pre-school teachers in N.S.W. confirmed this impression especially for urban dwelling Aborigines who often "prefer to mix with white families". It also means that the whole context within which pre-schooling is conceived and in which teachers are trained is one of traditional programs.

It should be emphasised, however, that the "flavour" of any single service for Aboriginal pre-school children still is influenced greatly by the skills and attitudes of the people actually responsible for the delivery of the service. This has been shown clearly in the present report from other States as well.

An example of an individualised program for Aborigines is the "Toomelah Outreach Project" a project funded by the Department of Y.A.C.S. Sue Fetherston, the Worker in that project, reported on it in November 1980. (9) She described the project as:

> A community based project which responds to the preference and needs of the Toomelah Aboriginal Community. Our 'target group' refers to the young mothers, teenagers (mothers and potential mothers) and children under the age of five years. The role of the Outreach Worker included the establishment and maintenance of home-based playgroups to act as a parent educator, establish recreational, sporting and educational activities, as well as social outings, etc.

The use by Aborigines of the Toy Library at Kempsey has been described as increasing. But, it has only been through considerable efforts at facilitating Aboriginal usage by staff that this has occurred. Similarly, it is only through efforts of staff that Aborigines seem to use the Mobile Research Unit at Hay, the Mobile Unit at Griffith and the Northern Roads Activity Van based at Inverell and focusing on the Aboriginal community at Tingha. Officers of the Department of Y.A.C.S. described the approach taken in the Toomelah Outreach Project, the Namoi Family Program (at Wee Waa) and the Northern Roads Activity Van (at Tingha) as one of support and encouragement for parents in child rearing practices and skills. These programs encourage the use of Aboriginal cultural material and attempt to develop pride in Aboriginal heritage. Children involved in these projects are from 0 to 5 years of age. The programs encourage skill-sharing and crafts with adults as well as knowledge of health, exercise and nutrition and the development of home-making skills.

Comments from Regional Advisers in N.S.W. showed a considerable variation between pre-schools in the kinds of programs run for Aboriginal children. As already noted, many urban Aboriginal children attending a local white-run pre-school in small numbers (3 or 4 or less) are likely to receive the same program as other children. The comments suggested that in these situations the attendance rates of Aborigines is rarely good and the contact between the Aboriginal parents and the pre-school is usually minimal.

Pre-schools with substantial or wholly Aboriginal enrolments also vary in their programs. The pre-school at Bourke (begun in 1969 as Project Enrichment of Childhood to provide compensatory pre-schooling, see Teasdale and Whitelaw,)(10) aims to develop formal school readiness with an emphasis on language enrichment using a structured teaching approach. In addition it aims to develop a positive self-image, and high self-esteem. It conducts a Home Liaison Service visiting homes at least once each two weeks. Nutritional supplement is integral to the program. The main teaching staff is white, but four Aboriginal Assistants are also employed.

The Wilcannia Pre-school is run through Our Lady of Compassion Aborigine Mission. It also conducts a structured language development program using D.I.S.T.A.R. materials, with nutritional meals an integral part of the program. As with Bourke, children may enrol from the age of 3 years and while no Aboriginal teachers are employed, there are four Aboriginal assistants. At Wilcannia the management committee is comprised of all Aborigines, with this being seen as aiding moves to Aboriginal self-management.

Other pre-schools in the New England region were described as following language enrichment programs. Many centres make special efforts to acquire materials such as puzzles, pictures and equipment with an Aboriginal background. Similarly, Aboriginal adults have helped write books on Aboriginal themes. Some centres develop Aboriginal techniques of art and craft. In some cases Aboriginal culture and heritage is focussed on especially at particular times, e.g. during "Aboriginal Week".

In terms of the development of new services the priority of the Department of Y.A.C.S. is towards "Neighbourhood Children's Centres".(11) These are multi-purpose centres providing a range of services to children and their families with one such service being Long Day Care. Inverell is an example of a Neighbourhood Children's Centre which has attempted to gain Aboriginal participation in its services as well as the local pre-school.

THE FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES AGENCY

The Family and Children's Services Agency (FACSA) was established in 1977 as a policy advisory body with a research function. It advises the Minister of Youth and Community Services on, among other things "... the needs of the community for services for families and children and makes recommendations to him in respect of the planning, development and delivery of services designed to meet those needs ..." (12) Its research and evaluation function includes the investigation of "alternative types of child-care and family support" and that it "evaluate the effectiveness of existing services and examine the requirements for a basic level and range of services equally accessible to all people". "At the moment, the Agency's main concern is to have opened up a wider range of services than is presently available with an emphasis on multi-purpose, community based centres at a neighbourhood level". (13)

In commenting on pre-schooling services, F.A.C.S.A. (14) mentions lack of access to facilities and then adds:

> Of services that have been provided, there has often been a cultural barrier intimidating Aboriginal people from using such services. Few services are planned in consultation with Aboriginal people; few take account of Aboriginal philosophy and culture, and few services are conducted or controlled by Aboriginal people.

A recent project undertaken by F.A.C.S.A. was the "Aboriginal Children's Research Project" (15), which was an action research project aimed at reducing the high numbers of Aboriginal children living in non-Aboriginal substitute care, including State Care. The project involved close co-operation and contact with Aboriginal families and Aboriginal communities. The research showed the breadth of some of the difficulties faced by Aborigines and their families. Partly as a consequence of the research, F.A.C.S.A. plans to facilitate the development of an experimental program for Aboriginal children under 5 and their families.

F.A.C.S.A. has a developmental function in the sense of encouraging diversity, flexibility and innovation in the provision of services. As part of that function it has helped fund (O.C.C. also provides funds) a Contact program. "Contact" is a service designed to make contact with people in isolated circumstances caring for young children and to provide the information and support they need. Isolation involves, social, cultural or geographical isolation. (16,17) There is a project co-ordinator for the program located in Sydney and officers working in isolated country areas. Its activities involve providing information via printed media, radio, television and a newly established telephone service. Much of its work in isolated country areas involves Aboriginal families with young children.

AN ABORIGINAL INITIATIVE: MURAWINA

Murawina began operating in early 1972, at first with a breakfast program for Aboriginal children before they went to school. It was run at first in a park then in an old warehouse donated by a Sydney business man. Within about a year, a change was made to a lunch program, and structured activities were arranged for the pre-school children (now up to about 40). With quite a clear vision of what they wanted for the children, the Murawina Committee overcame bureaucratic obstacles and eventually obtained funding for the Redfern and Mt. Druitt pre-schools in which the children "are taught to be proud of their Aboriginality whilst learning the basics they will need when they begin school". (18)

The latter paper goes on to say :

> Aboriginality is incorporated in all of the lessons they have. When the children have dancing they will do corrorborees along with musical chairs. When they have finger painting they will paint animal tracks 'just like the Aborigines did for thousands of years' they are told. Aboriginal music and songs are played on tape along with nursery rhymes. Leaves, stones and sea shells are used along with their puzzles, books and crayons. They are surrounded by Aboriginal adults, Aboriginal posters, painting, photographs, artifacts, bark paintings etc. This is to instill in them at all times their Aboriginal heritage. Their basic school preparation is taught to them through learning colours, shapes, letters, numbers etc.

Murawina at Redfern offers as well as full-day pre-school education programs, extended day care, occasional care and emergency care and acts as a drop-in centre for parents. Thus it is a multi-purpose centre wholly run by Aboriginal people. It is staffed by an Aboriginal Director and Aboriginal aides and managed by a council of Aboriginal women, Murawina Ltd. Murawina is supported by funds from the O.C.C., the D.A.A., and the State Department of Y.A.C.S. Murawina also assists in the training of Aboriginal girls by employing two each year who are then encouraged to participate in a suitable training course. Children who attend the Centre are collected by transport provided and are given a midday meal.

Murawina, Mt. Druitt is now a separate entity from Murawina, Redfern. It is based on a similar philosophy to Murawina at Redfern and runs a similar program.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The N.S.W. Department of Education began its involvement in pre-school education in 1973-74. Their role was seen to establish pre-schools in areas of "need" and where few other pre-school services existed. "Need" was determined by factors such as:

> Number of 0-5 year olds in the population; number of children already attending pre-schools; percentage of migrant and Aboriginal children living in an area; percent of pre-schoolers in high rise accommodation. (19)

About thirty new pre-school buildings have been constructed since 1974, and a number of existing buildings have been modified, all sited within the grounds of existing Primary Schools. The majority of the Department of Education's 56 pre-schools are in the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong with a few in country areas. No fees are charged for attendance, although a small charge may be made for a midday meal. As already noted a proportion of Commonwealth Government funding for pre-schools from the office of Child Care goes to the Department of Education ($900,000 in 1980/81). Pre-school funding is supplemented by State money. In additton the education Department receives a grant from the D.A.A. for Aboriginal Education.

According to the N.S.W. Department of Education there are (1981) only 23 Aboriginal children enrolled in the Department's pre-schools. These are mainly at Mt. Druitt, outer Liverpool, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Tweed Heads District. The Department is presently developing "guidelines for curriculum development for early childhood education in N.S.W. public schools". Although only in draft form, it seems the guidelines emphasise a traditional approach to pre-schooling, with statements about: education being an active rather than a passive process for the young child; each child has a natural desire to learn; early education seeks to develop the whole person; the child and its developmental needs must be central to planning for early childhood; play is an appropriate avenue for learning in early childhood; etc. The main aim of early childhood education seems to be "to promote the optimal, all-round development of each child as an individual". The draft guidelines argue that the teacher should know and understand each child and develop a working relationship with parents. The means towards fulfilling the particular aims of early childhood education include "the involvement of parents as partners in the education of their children" and the provision of experiences "to develop a positive, realistic self-image" and "an awareness and understanding of his/her environment".

No particular reference in the draft guidelines is made to special groups, such as Aboriginal children. This is consistent with the general policy of developing each child as an individual, according to his/her needs and background. It would be useful, however, if information and guidelines were available about how this is achieved with Aboriginal children.

The Department of Education's work in Aboriginal education in general is shaped considerably by the Aboriginal Education Unit which is situated within the Directorate of Special Programs. As well, the Department consults with the "N.S.W. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group", a body formed in 1977 "to act as an informal source of Aboriginal opinion and advice to the Minister and his Departments on the educational needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal people of New South Wales". (20) The latter memorandum also notes that the consultative group and the Aboriginal Education Unit were drafting an Aboriginal Education Policy Statement and an Aboriginal Studies Guideline for Teachers.

Through its documents and conferences the Department of Education influences not only its own pre-schools but also those in the non-government sector, for example, the S.C.F. pre-schools. The Department of Education does not run special/separate programs for Aboriginal pre-school children as such, because of the already noted philosophy that each pre-school child is given a special program.

PARTICIPATION RATES

No official statistics on participation rates of Aboriginal children have been kept in N.S.W. As for other States, the discussion of participation rates is based on personal impressions and experiences of several individuals involved in pre-school services. Again the impression is that participation rates vary greatly from one situation to another. The factors associated with high or low participation in N.S.W. tend to be the same as in other States. Thus, the comment was made several times that enrolment levels and attendance rates vary greatly according to whether or not transport is provided to bring children to pre-school. As well, in many Centres the employment of Aboriginal staff, in the pre-school or as a caseworker, has had a positive effect on participation. Equally, when the Aboriginal staff are no longer employed, participation drops. Aboriginal parent beliefs about the non-importance of pre-schooling is also a factor considered by some people to be associated with poor participation rates.

Comments were made by Aborigines in the Legislative Assembly Report from the Select Committee (21) that fees were a problem with many Aborigines and made it difficult for them to participate in pre-schools. Finally, other comments have been made by Aborigines about pre-schools that suggest there are "positive" (see discussion of participation in S.A.) reasons for non-attendance at white-controlled facilities. Thus, Mrs Alison Kerr stated in evidence to the Parliament of N.S.W. Committee upon Aborigines:

> We need pre-schools in this area. Unless we have pre-schools for Aboriginal children, as they do at Redfern, the people will continue to walk with their heads down. We should be looking at the sky. We should have pre-schools staffed by Aboriginal teachers to teach the children to be proud.

In the Riverina region a group of Aboriginal parents have been pressing for their own pre-school for some time and comments were made that they had trained their own staff in readiness.

STAFFING

The staffing pattern in N.S.W. pre-school facilities is similar to other States in the sense of the dominant pattern being for the person in charge to be a qualified white teacher assisted in Aboriginal pre-schools by Aboriginal staff including aides, assistants, clerks, cooks, bus drivers, liaison workers etc. Murawina is an example of a Centre in which Aboriginal staff manage and run the Centre. The Aboriginal Quarterly, 1981, (22) gives figures for the D.A.A. funding in N.S.W. for 1980-81. From the figures provided on Education it seems that the D.A.A. funded about nine Aboriginal pre-school aides or assistants.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND ISSUES

Several issues and areas for possible future development in early childhood provisions for Aborigines in N.S.W. were mentioned in evidence given to the Parliament of N.S.W. Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon Aborigines. (23) These tend to be confirmed by a range of other sources and comments from those involved in Aboriginal early childhood in N.S.W. The main areas include the following:

(a) Early childhood education for Aborigines is important for their future adjustment to and success in school. Many believe that existing provisions are inadequate either because they feel pre-schools are not available to Aboriginal children or appropriate kinds of pre-schools are not available;

(b) there is a need for more Aboriginal pre-schools, run and managed by Aborigines for Aborigines, in which Aboriginal culture is fostered and developed. There was some criticism of the lack of Aboriginal involvement in S.C.F.-run Aboriginal pre-schools;

(c) the payment of fees for pre-school attendance is seen as being difficult for some Aboriginal families, often meaning they do not participate in pre-school;

(d) there is a need for greater involvement of Aboriginal parents in pre-schools, not only to help parents become more aware of the importance of pre-schooling, but also because of the need for Aboriginal input into the planning and running of pre-schools for Aboriginal children;

(e) teachers involved in Aboriginal early childhood programs should have appropriate training in Aboriginal education.

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SUMMARY TABLE: NEW SOUTH WALES

Administration	N.S.W. is the only State without a policy of universal pre-school education. Instead, its government encourages community-based centres which are the responsibility of the Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS). The Department of Education (DE) has developed some pre-schools, but only in areas of particular need. Most services for Aboriginal children are provided by private groups (e.g. Kindergarten Union; S.C.F.) under the auspices of Y.A.C.S.
Age of Admission	There is considerable diversity in N.S.W. Generally, however, pre-schools cater for Aboriginal children in the 3 to 5 years age range.
Funding	Community and private groups in N.S.W. are supported by Commonwealth and State funds, the process of funding and licensing being carried out by Y.A.C.S. In administering Commonwealth funds, Y.A.C.S. draws grants from both D.A.A. and O.C.C., and subsidises all forms of early childhood provision, including day care and sessional pre-school.
Aims and Philosophies	Due to the large number of different groups and organisations involved in the provision of early education services to Aboriginal children in N.S.W. there is wide diversity in programs, and it is impossible to generalise about the nature of the curriculum.
Enrolments	Comprehensive statistics are maintained by Y.A.C.S. due to its licensing role. In 1980 there were 882 Aboriginal children attending community-based pre-schools, 69 in private (commercial) pre-schools, 171 in child care centres, and 55 in family day care (a total of 1177 Aboriginal children, constituting 1.5% of all children enrolled in these facilities). Additionally, there were 23 Aboriginal children enrolled in D.E. pre-schools (1981 data).
Participation Rates	The overal diversity of provisions in N.S.W. makes it impossible to estimate participation rates.
Staffing	In general, qualified white teachers are employed, with Aboriginal aides in pre-schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal enrolments. Only about 9 Aboriginal aides were funded from D.A.A. grants in 1980-81, however.
Aboriginal Initiatives	(i) In the inner-Sydney suburb of Redfern, Aboriginal people manage and run Murawina, a centre that provides (among other things) pre-school, day care and parent support. A second centre has been developed at Mt. Druitt, west of Sydney. (ii) Aboriginal Family Education Centres (AFECs) apparently are still operating quite extensively as part of the wider social movement initiated by the Bernard van Leer Foundation project in N.S.W.

CHAPTER 12

SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND

The Save the Children Fund (SFC)

> was founded by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919, [&] is an independent voluntary organisation professionally staffed whose purpose is the rescue in disaster and the longer term welfare of needy children irrespective of nationality, race or religion. The ultimate aims of the Fund are to create conditions in which children can grow to a healthy maturity....(1)

It is an international organisation originally founded in the United Kingdom, with several branches in Australia. An important element of its work in Australia is the provision of pre-schools for Aboriginal children and other disadvantaged children. By far the largest number of S.C.F. pre-schools are found in NSW (thirteen), with a significant number in Victoria (four). The present chapter focuses on these two States in order to describe the type of service provided by S.C.F. pre-schools and to outline some of the issues arising from their work. Statistics on Aboriginal pre-school enrolments given in the earlier state chapters always included S.C.F. pre-schools.

The first S.C.F. pre-school was opened in NSW in 1963 at Coffs Harbour following consultation with the local community.

> For the next 12 years, at first covering all costs from S.C.F. donated funds they opened one pre-school per year in areas which had a high Aboriginal population, who invited them to begin work there. Slowly as the work expanded, recognition in the form of funding, came from the Federal Government through DAA. (2)

At present, S.C.F. pre-schools are funded partly out of S.C.F. resources (which come, for example, from public donations, appeals, branch contributions, commercial enterprises etc.) but wherever possible S.C.F. seeks relevant Government grants and subsidies. This usually means special funding from DAA, but often they also receive usual Government subsidies for pre-schools (e.g. from the Health Commission in Victoria). It is a condition of DAA funding that at least 80 percent of the children in SCF centres must be Aboriginal.

The thirteen S.C.F. pre-schools in NSW are located at Armidale, Brewarrina, Coffs Harbour, Cowra, Goodooga, Griffith, Gulargambone, Kempsey, Lake Cargelligo, Nambucca Heads, Taree, Walgett and Wellington with a total enrolment of about 500 children. The thirteen pre-schools are administered by a sub-committee of S.C.F., which visits each pre-school each year. The official statement of pre-school policy and practice from the NSW Division of S.C.F. says "The needs of the Aboriginal children are good nutrition, health and hygiene, linguistic and social development". (3) The latter document goes on to describe the program for their pre-schools in each of these areas. "Nutrition" is provided via a mid-day meal, "health and hygiene" is catered for via continual medical checks, training in personal hygiene and giving of vitamins. Linguistic and social development are aimed at preparing the child for School. Thus, MacArthur (4) says:

> Aboriginal children have already started to fall behind in linguistic and thus cognitive ability. The pre-school teacher recognises this disadvantage and plans her syllabus to augment vocabulary, clarify concepts and achieve comprehensive language skills as effectively as possible.

In describing the approach of S.C.F. pre-schools, MacArthur (5) also said "Scientists tell us that dominant races absorb others in a civilisation. It is possible that by taking the children in their formative years and imparting to them the ethics, social structures, logic and values of our dominant European culture, we are accelerating their absorption into a society where their Aboriginal identity is permanently lost".

Each of the thirteen NSW pre-schools is run by a qualified white teacher, but all other staff (aides, cooks, bus drivers, gardeners etc.) are Aboriginal. In NSW there are about 65 such Aboriginal staff. "Parent groups are encouraged" in S.C.F. pre-schools, "though like any community elsewhere interest varies from place to place". (6) "The community at large is encouraged to participate in the school program and have joined in excursions, storytelling, traditional music, cooking etc." (7)

Apart from their interest in child welfare, S.C.F. also has a policy of "training local personnel to take over the work". (8) To this end, the S.C.F. has offered various opportunities to its Aboriginal Aides through visits from advisory staff and an annual week-long seminar in Sydney. Still, however, no Aborigines have obtained formal qualifications and taken over as a director of any S.C.F. pre-school.

Critics of S.C.F. pre-schools in NSW, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, focus mainly on a perceived lack of effort or commitment by S.C.F. to move to self-management by Aborigines, and to a perceived limited involvement of Aboriginal groups in the pre-schools, with a consequent failure to enhance Aboriginal culture and identity through its pre-schools. The S.C.F. responds to such criticisms by claiming it has a policy of working towards self-management and that local Aboriginal groups either do not wish or are not yet ready for self-management. For example, in their submission to the Hous[illegible] Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs ([illegible]ey say:

> It would be most difficult, given the standard of literacy in many areas, for the Aboriginal community to be involved

> academically with the direction of the pre-school. However with the graduation within a few years of trained Aboriginal teachers we look for some of them to choose to work with their own people.

The S.C.F. position is also shown in a statement by Mrs. Pamela Barrington, secretary of the S.C.F. NSW Division. She said:

> In 1980 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs sent one of their officers to each of the areas, to speak to the teachers, the staff, the parents and to the community generally about self-management of the pre-schools. The end result was that the people would prefer the status quo. (10)

The reports of DAA visits to the various S.C.F. pre-schools clearly show the difficulties and barriers (e.g. factionalism) to the implementation of self-managment, but the conclusion reached by the DAA was not that the people would "prefer the status quo". It seems that considerable preparation and training of the local Aboriginal communities may be necessary prior to self-management. Critics of the S.C.F. claim they are not moving quickly enough and seriously enough to prepare and train local Aboriginal groups for self-management.

The four kindergartens sponsored by the S.C.F. Victorian Division are situated at Robinvale, Mooroopna, Nowa Nowa and Dareton (which is located just over the border in NSW). These centres

> provide play groups, kindergarten training, youth activities, arts and craft sessions and general welfare services. Although their programs are designed mainly for Aboriginal children, about 20 of the enrolments in the play groups and kindergartens are children from needy white families. This integration is seen as being important to Aboriginal children in preparation for their move to primary school where they will need to mix with large numbers of non-Aboriginal children. (11)

An important feature of Victorian S.C.F. kindergartens, as in other States, is the provision of transport for the children. The S.C.F. believes attendance would be much lower without transport.

The 1980-81 Annual Report of the S.C.F. in Victoria (12) gives brief descriptions of each of its four kindergartens provided by the teacher in each case. There seem to be three features of these descriptions:

(a) the programs have much in common with "traditional" pre-school programs found in any kindergarten;

(b) mention is made of special adaptations of the programs to the needs and characteristics of Aboriginal children, and

(c) emphasis seems to be placed on the preparation of Aboriginal children for school.

The following quotations illustrate these points:

"Our pre-school program is aimed to help our children - particularly the Aboriginal children - to eventually cope with a primary school situation" (Dareton).
"Perhaps the most important aspect of pre-school is socialisation" (Dareton).
"Communication skills are vitally important, but in this area Aboriginal children are far behind their white conterparts ... Children must have reasonable language skills to begin reading at school, it is a constant part of our day" (Dareton).
"It is necessary to try to understand their [Aboriginal children] basic cultural differences so that a feeling of mutual trust can be built up between the teacher and the child" (Mooroopna).
"We can provide programs to develop a positive self-image for Aborigines through them gaining a greater understanding and appreciation of their culture" (Mooroopna).
"What we are striving to do is to ensure that the Aboriginal child who leaves our pre-school is not handicapped in any way and can start primary school on an equal footing with other children". (Robinvale).

In summary, according to many viewpoints, SCF has made an important contribution to the early childhood education of Aboriginal children. Certainly its efforts tended to pre-date those of others in the field. Equally, from many viewpoints the SCF pre-schools have made an important contribution to health, welfare and education of young Aboriginal children. Some critics argue, however, that the approach of SCF has not developed and enhanced Aboriginal culture and identity and has done little in fostering self-determination or self-management in Aboriginal communities.

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CHAPTER 13

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN DAY CARE

The repeated finding in the course of the present study was that most of the Aboriginal children using pre-school facilities were to be found in educational programs, usually of a sessional nature and usually administered, controlled or sponsored by the major State or Territory Institutions responsible for pre-school education (e.g. Education Departments, Kindergarten Unions, S.C.F. etc.). When State or Territory bodies responsible for day care services were asked to identify Aboriginal pre-school children attending day care their consistent response (except possibly NSW, see below) was that there were "none" or "relatively few" or "very few" Aborigines in day care.

The above paragraph seems to imply that it is easy to separate "educational" and "day care" services for pre-school children. This is certainly not true, and the possible separation of the two needs to be explored in order to better understand the situation for Aboriginal children.

In most States and the Northern Territory, the division between pre-school (educational) and day care facilities is a historical one and exists today in terms of official labels applied by the facilities themselves or by Government Departments who administer or fund early childhood services. Thus, "pre-schools" and "kindergartens" are labelled and seen as providing educational services and they do so mainly on a sessional basis. In contrast, "day care" facilities are typically labelled as such (although other labels may also be used, e.g. Day Nursery, Creche) and are licensed under separate regulations (including different staff qualifications) and are funded in different ways to the pre-school facilities. This separation of the two areas of early childhood service was present in the origins of the two and has existed ever since. (1) At present, day care facilities are usually either independent commercial enterprises or are Government subsidised (via the Children's Services Program). In addition there is "Family Day Care", where small groups of children are cared for in an individual home. When commercial and subsidised Day Care Centres as well as Family Day Care Services are surveyed then the typical pattern in most areas of Australia is that relatively few Aboriginal children are found to participate.

One of the difficulties in separating pre-school and day care services arises from the fact that the time children spend in sessional (two-and-a-half to three hours) or full day (five to six hours) pre-school programs can be classified as time in care. This attitude is reflected, for example, in the report from NSW by Robertson and Cox (2) where such pre-school programs are classified as "sessional care" and "full-day care" respectively. Another problem in their separation is that the service provided in "day care centres" contains an educational component. In fact, the Australian Pre-schools Committee (3) says on this question:

> The Committee's position is that education and care cannot be separated ... In the best (child care) centres a high standard of physical care is coupled with appropriate educational programs at least the equivalent of those provided within sessional pre-schools.

Furthermore, the efforts by the Office of Child Care to encourage the "integration of services" in an attempt to expand services available to families in pre-schools and kindergartens, has meant that some child care services (e.g. outside or beyond sessional hours, temporary or occasional care, care for children younger than those attending pre-school) often now exist in kindergartens or pre-schools. The development of the integrated service concept of Neighbourhood Centres has also meant a blurring of boundaries between day care and pre-school education. The situation is made even more complex in the case of Aboriginal children by the existence of independent Aboriginal programs or facilities, which include elements of both day care and education, offering a variety of services to the pre-school child and its family.

It is intended in the present chapter to briefly describe some of the main features with respect to Aboriginal children and day care, and then to consider possible reasons for the apparently low Aboriginal participation in day care. The question of funding will be considered first, then the situation in each state will be briefly described and finally the nature and contribution of the Aboriginal Child Care Agencies will be outlined.

In terms of funding, Aboriginal children may use day care services that are subsidised through Commonwealth (OCC) or State Governments and provided for the community in general. Equally, they have access to private commercial day care centres. In addition, special facilities for Aboriginal children may be funded, usually by the Commonwealth Government. From the States and Territory description which follows and the earlier outline of the role of the Commonwealth Government in early childhood services, it can be seen that both D.A.A. and the O.C.C. are at present financially supporting some child care services for Aborigines. Partly because these services are never single purpose services (i.e. restricted only to day care) it is virtually impossible to estimate the extent of the Commonwealth's contribution to day care services for Aborigines.

In Queensland the O.C.C. provides financial support for at least one multi-functional (including a child care component) Neighbourhood Centre for Aborigines. In addition, the D.A.I.A. kindergartens typically run full-day programs (i.e. 5 - 6 hours per day) for children as young as 2years 9months, and this may be seen as containing elements of day care. The relative lack of Aboriginal participation in general community day care centres in Queensland is shown by the Creche and Kindergarten Association's Annual Report for 1980 (4) where nineteen day care centres were listed and none was shown as enrolling Aboriginal or Islander children.

Information provided by the Health Commission of Victoria Pre-school Child Development Branch was that "virtually no" Aboriginal children were in registered day care centres in that state. There are, however, two Aboriginal Child Care Centres (already described in the description of Victoria) namely Yappera and Rumbalara. In these two centres, in addition to pre-school educational programs, other services including occasional care and full-day care are to be provided. The Robinvale Co-operative also runs a non-registered child minding centre at Robinvale.

In the Northern Territory the Department of Community Development (DCD) via the Division of Community Welfare is responsible for child care, including substitute care, family services, day care centre registration and neighbourhood centres. The D.C.D. operates two child care/neighbourhood centres (in Darwin and Tennant Creek). In October 1981, there were 28 registered day care and neighbourhood centres with ten of them receiving funding from the O.C.C. The twenty eight centres had a total capacity of about 700 children. D.C.D. records showed in 1981 less than 24 Aboriginal children involved in day care or neighbourhood centres and only two Aboriginal children participating in Family Day Care programs. (5) Some mission schools (e.g. Daly River) run full day pre-school programs (in this case 8.15 am to 3.00 pm) and hence could be seen as including a day care element. As well, the pre-schools in Aboriginal townships usually offer a full-day program.

The already noted (see Chapter 6) independent Aboriginal programs in the Northern Territory provide day care services. Three important ones are the Galiwinku Community Child Care Centre, the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Child Care Centre, Alice Springs and the Kalano Association in Katherine. Each of these will now be described. Galiwinku Community Child Care Centre Galiwinku is a large Aboriginal community with an excess of 1,000 Aboriginal people living in a comparatively well developed township. The following description of their Child Care Centre has been extracted from a funding application by the Galiwinku Community Council. (6)

> Purpose
> The women of Galiwinku are currently operating a child care centre in a Health Department building which has been given to the Council. This building requires repairs and certain equipment needs to be purchased so that the child care function can be adequately carried out.
> Child care is one of a number of activities that are to be carried out in this building. The community health workers operate from there and another section is used for homemaker activities which are essentially educational in nature.
> Need
> The community has decided that a child care centre is needed

to care for the pre-school age children of working mothers and women who wish to go hunting for the day. They see a need to formalise, to a certain extent, the traditional form of child care. The women and the Council do not believe that the child care centre is breaking down the traditional role of the family. They point out that the women providing the care will be related to the children being cared for in every case.

The women involved in the centre have raised $1,000 towards the cost of renovating the building and the Mission and Services Trust Fund of the Uniting Church has provided them with $1,000. The Council is in the process of building a fence around the centre and pay one full-time supervisor's wages and six part-time wages from C.D.E.P. funds.

Aims and Objectives

1. To enable and encourage the parents to go to work leaving their child safe in the Child Care Centre.

2. To prepare the child for schooling, as the child learns to develop habits at this stage.

3. To meet the social needs of the children, that is love, care, recognition, discipline, etc.

4. To meet the nutritional needs of children by providing nutritional food and also educating women along with their children to get nutritional food.

5. To meet the health needs of the children by providing periodical medical check-ups, and also educate women on child health and hygiene.

6. To educate mothers on child care and involve them in the Child Care Program, in order to get practical experience.

7. To work more closely with the parents by home visiting and maintaining separate progress records for each child, and help the parents to bring up the children as good and responsible citizens of Australia.

The Kalano Association, Katherine The Kalano Association, in Katherine, is operating an Aboriginal community program which encompasses a wide range of activities. As part of these activities they are providing unofficial child care services, and are effectively operating as a casual day care centre. This program, funded by the D.A.A., employs two people in the child care project, one of whom is Aboriginal.

The Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Child Care Centre, Alice Springs The Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (C.A.A.C.) is a body which is centrally involved in providing a wide variety of medical and social welfare programs for Aborigines. As part of its operations, the C.A.A.C. has recently established a Child Care Centre in Alice Springs for Aboriginal children. The Centre currently has 20 to 30 Aboriginal children attending on a regular, full-time basis. This Centre is funded directly by the D.C.C., but is not registered with the Northern Territory D.C.D. as a Child Care Centre. The Centre employs two full-time and one part-time Aboriginal staff.

In discussion, members of the C.A.A.C. indicated that the Centre was established in response to the inappropriateness of existing non-Aboriginal Child Care Centres, which were seen as alienating and relatively hostile towards Aboriginal parents. The Centre caters for both fringe dwelling and urban Aboriginal parents, with a high proportion of the users being single income families.

Members of the C.A.A.C. were of the opinion that there were significant child care needs on outlying Aboriginal communities which were not being met, and suggested that seminal women's centres/child care centres were beginning to emerge within these communities. While they agreed that such developments needed support, they were cautious about the involvement of government authorities in such areas.

The Department for Community Welfare (DCW) in South Australia is responsible for the registration and funding of Day Care Centres. Officers of D.C.W. reported no Aboriginal children using day care services in S.A. This is somewhat contrary to the findings of Wundersitz (7) in the Port Adelaide area where she found a few Aboriginal families using family day care. It should also be noted in Adelaide that the Alberton Aboriginal Pre-school runs a full-day program four days per week due in part to an apparent need from parents for a day care component to pre-schooling for their children.

In Tasmania, as far as could be determined, no Aboriginal pre-school aged children were attending formal day care facilities. In Western Australia the Department for Community Welfare (DCW) is responsible for day care facilities. Small numbers of Aboriginal children use day care, with D.C.W. records for 1980 showing 31 Aboriginal children in Day Care.

New South Wales Government policy is much more oriented to day care facilities for pre-school children of all ages than other State Governments, where most attention seems to be given to sessional pre-school education in the year prior to school entry. The policy of the NSW Government is reflected in a document by Robertson and Cox (8) on children's services in NSW when they said:

> the types of services are maldistributed, with most resources going to older children in short term centres, very little being available to the child under two with a mother who works.

The Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS) is responsible for the licensing of Day Care Centres in NSW. Y.A.C.S. administers Commonwealth funding through both the D.A.A. and the O.C.C.. Y.A.C.S. uses government funds to subsidise the whole range of pre-school services for children including the various forms of day care (see description of NSW in Chapter 11). Statistics from Y.A.C.S. for 1980 gave the following figures for Aboriginal children in various forms of Day Care; 3 were in community based occasional care, 157 in long day care centres, 9 in private commercial long day care centres, 55 in family day care and 2 in other licensed small child care centres. (9) In terms of registered facilities, it is clear then that NSW has relatively more Aboriginal children in day care than any other state or the Northern Territory. In addition, it can be seen from the earlier description of NSW that many places are available in NSW pre-schools for full-day attendance by Aboriginal children (e.g. see Table 5, p.181).

The Murawina Aboriginal pre-schools at Redfern and Mt. Druitt provide a range of services other than pre-school programs. For example, Murawina at Redfern offers, as well as full-day pre-school educational programs, extended day care, occasional care and emergency care.

In Summary, from this brief survey of Aboriginal use of day care around Australia, three main points emerge. The first concerns the relatively small numbers of Aboriginal children in day care if overall figures for Australia are considered. The second point is that there seem to be wide differences among the states and the NT from virtually no use of registered facilities to the situation in NSW where much larger numbers of Aboriginal children use day care (but still not at the same rate as for the community in general). The third point relates to the apparent need or demand for child care services by Aboriginal families. The present finding was that repeatedly around Australia where Aboriginal groups established or conduct their own early childhood service it contains one or more forms of day care service. This raises questions about possible explanations for low Aboriginal use of existing or available day care services. These questions will now be considered.

Reasons for low Aboriginal use of Day Care

An argument sometimes proposed is that because of Aboriginal use of traditional extended family arrangements in providing child care where necessary, Aborigines do not need formal child care services. That Aborigines are setting up their own child care centres is a fact which counters that argument. Many Aboriginal groups (e.g. CAAC, Murawina) are simply rejecting the notion they do not need child care.

Other possible reasons for low involvement of Aborigines in day care are as follows:

(a) Aboriginal parents find existing white-controlled child care

(a) Aboriginal parents find existing white-controlled child care facilities alien and inappropriate. The C.A.A.C. gave this as one reason for the establishment of their own centre in Alice Springs. While such feelings of exclusion and alienation may exist, it is unlikely to be the only reason for low usage by Aborigines because the same feelings have been said to exist with respect to non-Aboriginal pre-schools, which Aborigines do attend.

(b) Aboriginal parents do not know about the availability of Child Care services. This may be a partial reason, but there is no evidence for or against this proposition.

(c) Aboriginal parents believe they cannot afford Child Care services. While subsidies are usually available, Aboriginal parents may not be aware of these and may avoid Child Care facilities in the belief they cannot afford them.

(d) Child Care services are geographically isolated from Aboriginal families. This is obviously true outside the main urban areas, where very few services are available anyway. Geographical location is also likely to be an important factor in the urban areas, where distance and limited access to transport may make the facilities relatively inaccessible.

The above reasons mainly relate to Aboriginal use of existing non-Aboriginal child care facilities. Another possible factor in low Aboriginal use of child care is the fact that comparatively few Aboriginal groups have established their own child care centres. There are likely to be a wide range of reasons underlying this lack of Aboriginal controlled centres. However, one important contributing factor already mentioned as an issue in early childhood services for Aborigines is the difficulty and complexity in obtaining financial support for services. These difficulties and complexities certainly apply to the child care field, where services are much more "community based" than in the area of pre-school education.

Burns (10) and McNulty (11) are critical of the "community involvement and management" requirement for the funding of Day Care Services. They see it as unreasonable to expect local communities (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) in the form of collections of parents, to develop proposals, write submissions and manage facilities etc. To the extent that potential sources of Government funds for Day Care (e.g. OCC and DAA) require Aboriginal initiative, organisation, management skills etc. it seems that difficulties are often placed in the way of Aboriginal groups developing their own facilities. There is the added complication that from the viewpoint of many Aborigines they believe that Government funding bodies, at times, lack an understanding of and sympathy with Aboriginal needs. Furthermore, some Aborigines (e.g. CAAC) believe that involvement of Government bodies may shape the orientation of facilities away from Aboriginal needs and towards structures deemed appropriate by white authorities.

The Aboriginal Child Care Agencies

Aboriginal Child Care Agencies have been established in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth (12) with financial assistance being given by the Children's Services Program via the Family Support Services Scheme. Detailed published information is available on the Melbourne Aboriginal Child Care Agency (13) and it will be used here to illustrate the role and functions of the Agencies. Available information on the four Agencies suggests substantial agreement among them in their basic aims and philosophies.

The Melbourne Aboriginal Child Care Agency was established in February, 1976. It was supported by funds from the Family Support Services Scheme. It is an Aboriginal community organisation, managed by an Aboriginal Board of Directors. It is an example of Aboriginal initiative and self-help, and provides a model of how funding to the Aboriginal community based on the policy of self-determination can be successful.

Rather than being restricted to work with pre-school aged children, the Melbourne Aboriginal Child Care Agency (ACCA) is concerned about the welfare of Aboriginal children of all ages. One of the main aspects of its work involves children in State Care and those at risk of being admitted to Institutional Care. It aims to offer suitable alternatives to Institutional Care via the placement of children in Aboriginal families or in non-Aboriginal families who are sympathetic to the Aboriginal issues surrounding the care of Aboriginal children. Thus, important features of its program are the provision of emergency foster care on a temporary basis and temporary child care. It also provides an advisory/counselling service to non-Aboriginal families who may have adopted or fostered an Aboriginal child and general guidance and counselling to families who foster Aboriginal children.

In Victoria, formal recognition of the A.C.C.A. has been given by the Department of Community Welfare Services in that a directive has been given that the A.C.C.A. must be consulted about "any Aboriginal child which comes to the attention of the Social Welfare Department and that children cannot be placed unless the Agency is involved". Nevertheless, "many Social Workers tend to use the Aboriginal Child Care Agency only as and when it suits them". (14) In the other States links with Government Departments involved in Aboriginal child placement have also been made, although the Agencies have not always been given official recognition. Such recognition or at least close co-operation between the Agencies and Government Departments would seem important for the Agencies to fulfill their stated functions.

It can be seen that the Agencies are not providing "child care" services of the kind that is the main concern of this report. Nevertheless, their work does often involve pre-school aged children and their role is intimately concerned with the "care" of Aboriginal

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children in a wider sense than the notion of day care being discussed in the present report. An important reason for including them here is that they represent examples of Aboriginal initiatives and show the potential of Aboriginal groups to organise and manage services for the Aboriginal community.

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CHAPTER 14

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION *

This chapter is concerned with describing Aboriginal involvement in educational and training programs relating to early childhood services. This involvement can occur in a number of contexts, including:

1. Normal entry to tertiary programs leading to accredited teaching qualifications (usually Dip. T. (Early Childhood)).

2. Special entry to normal tertiary programs, with or without additional support facilities such as tutorial or counselling assistance.

3. Special entry to enclave programs, leading to normal accredited awards.

4. Special entry to specific purpose tertiary programs leading to special purpose awards, which may subsequently lead to locally accredited teaching qualifications, or to para-professional awards.

5. Entry to T.A.F.E. awards (normally Child Care Certificates) within T.A.F.E. institutions.

6. In-service courses for teachers' aides, provided by employing authorities.

Aboriginal involvement in programs within these varying contexts is described on a State by State basis, followed by a general discussion of issues involved in the provision of education programs. This description is preceded by a brief discussion of Aboriginal involvement in tertiary education generally.

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* We would wish to note that the material included in this section of the report was collected in the latter half of 1981. A number of significant developments have occurred since that time, including an increase in the number of tertiary institutions providing special entry programs, bridging courses and enclave programs, and an increase in the range of courses offered. The report of the N.A.E.C. conference held in Perth in July 1982, should provide more recent information on these developments. In the light of these developments a number of comments in this section need to be considered cautiously.

ABORIGINES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

A number of recent surveys provide detailed information on Aboriginal involvement in tertiary education, and extended discussion of the many issues involved. It is not the intent of this report to replicate these surveys. Readers are referred to three surveys in particular: "Survey of Aboriginal Access to Tertiary Education", Commonwealth Education Department, 1981; (1) "Submission to the National Inquiry Into Teacher Education", N.A.E.C., 1979; (2) and "Aboriginal Futures", B. Watts, 1980, (3) (especially chapters 14 and 18). More specific reports are also referred to below. This section should be seen as supplementary to these surveys.

The Commonwealth survey provides information on Aboriginal involvement in tertiary education institutions in 1980, including Universities, C.A.E.s, Teachers Colleges, and Agricultural Colleges, but excluding T.A.F.E. Institutions, Darwin Community College, Batchelor, and the Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide. It is clear from the figures provided by this survey that Aboriginal involvement in tertiary education has increased very substantially over the last decade: (4)

	N.S.W.	VIC.	Q.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	A.C.T.	AUST.
1969	5	-	4	3	6	-	-	18
1975	62	41	39	43	30	2	6	127
1980	192	67	174	151	272	12	13	881

While these figures indicate very real achievements, they need to be interpreted with some caution. The following comments all refer to the 1980 figures. (5)

(a) 552 students (63 percent) were enrolled in special or enclave programs.

(b) 176 students (20 percent) were enrolled in University programs, 688 (78 percent) at C.A.E.s and 17 (2 percent) in other tertiary institutions.

(c) Levels of qualifications being attempted were:

		Percent
Masters	3	0.3
Masters Qualifying	1	0.1
Post-graduate Diplomas	4	0.4
Bachelors Degree (Hons.)	1	0.1
Bachelors Degree	182	20.7
Diploma	277	31.4
Associate Diploma	66	7.5
Certificate	347	39.4

(d) Fields of study were relatively limited, and included:

	Percent
Teacher Education	37.0
Arts/Humanities	11.0
Social Welfare/Social Science	11.0
Tertiary Bridging Courses	23.0

(e) 425 students (48 percent)enrolled through special entry provisions.

A number of general comments can be made about these figures:

(a) The proportion of Aboriginal enrolments involved in tertiary education is 0.5 percent of the total Aboriginal population, compared with 2.2 percent for the total Australian population. However, if comparisons are made only with students undertaking qualifications at U.G.3 or higher levels, the proportion of Aboriginal students drops to 0.3 percent, while the total Australian figure remains unchanged. This indicates that Aborigines are still seriously under-represented in tertiary education, despite the very significant gains over the last decade. (6)

(b) The pattern of Aboriginal enrolments indicates the recency of Aboriginal involvement in tertiary education, with a high proportion of students enrolled in bridging courses, Certificate courses and Associate Diploma courses, and increasingly smaller proportions enrolled in higher degree courses. (7)

(c) There is a heavy emphasis on teacher education, social work and humanities subjects, with little involvement in the "hard" sciences or the "hard" professions.

(d) The bulk of Aboriginal enrolments (78 percent) are in C.A.E.s.

(e) Almost two thirds of the enrolments (63 percent) are in 11 special programs, of which 10 are offered in C.A.E.s. (8)

ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

1. A total of 328 Aboriginal students were enrolled in Tertiary Teacher Education programs in 1980. Of these 53 were enrolled in university courses (although 50 of these were enrolled in the Sydney University 1 year Teacher Aide program, leading to a Certificate), 260 were enrolled in C.A.E. courses, and a further 15 in "other" institutions. (9)

2. Of the students enrolled in Teacher Education programs:

    2 were undertaking Post-Graduate Diplomas
    8 were undertaking Bachelors Degrees
    257 were undertaking Diplomas (178 of these in enclave programs)
    61 were undertaking Certificates (10)

3. The distribution of Aboriginal enrolments in Teacher Education programs by State was as follows:

N.S.W.	VIC.	Q.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	A.C.T.	AUST.
93	18	102	60	53	-	2	328

However, the A.T.E.P. program at Batchelor, although not recognised by S.A.A.T.E. as a tertiary program, should be included, adding a further 46 enrolments. (11)

Some general comments can be made about these figures:

(a) The bulk of the Aboriginal teacher education students (79 percent) were enrolled in C.A.E.s, 67 percent were enrolled in enclave or special entry programs. (These figures exclude Batchelor). (12)

(b) The majority of these students were enrolled in primary teacher education programs, with few being enrolled in secondary programs. Details of enrolments in Early Childhood programs are provided below, but the number is very small.

(c) The number of students enrolled in courses leading to accredited teaching awards was 26[illegible]. Assuming these are predominantly 3 year programs, and accepting an optimistic success rate of 50 percent, these figures suggest that current enrolment patterns will lead to some 45 Aboriginal teachers becoming qualified annually. This is less than half the number required if the N.A.E.C. target of 1000 Aboriginal teachers is to be met by 1990. Again, readers are referred to the N.A.E.C. 1982 Conference for a recent assessment of this.

(d) There were, in 1981, only 4 special entry/enclave programs leading to accredited teaching awards, one in Queensland (A.I.T.E.P., Townsville C.A.E.), two in South Australia (A.T.E.P. , Adelaide C.A.E., and K.U. program, Hartley C.A.E.), (13) and one in Western Australia (A.T.E.P., Mt. Lawley C.A.E.). These programs had 170 students enrolled. Any substantial increase in Aboriginal enrolments in Teacher Education programs is likely to occur through the extension of enclave/special entry programs, rather than through increases in normal entry.

(e) No Australia-wide figures on Aboriginal enrolments in Early Childhood Education programs have been collected. A total of 32 tertiary institutions throughout Australia are currently offering E.C.E. courses. (14) Some of these institutions have Aboriginal students enrolled, some of these students may be enrolled in E.C.E. programs. The Commonwealth Education Department notes an intention to regularly up-date the S.A.A.T.E. report. We would suggest that the Department be approached to include in subsequent surveys specific information on E.C.E. enrolments.

ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES TRAINING PROGRAMS

The range of different kinds of training programs in Early Childhood Services, and the patterns of Aboriginal involvement vary substantially from State to State. This section describes the patterns on a State-by-State basis, followed by a section providing an overview of programs, and a discussion of issues involved. We were not able to identify any Aboriginal students enrolled in Early Childhood training programs in Tasmania or the A.C.T. Nor, so far as we are aware, are there any special entry programs designed to alleviate this situation. Consequently, we have not included a separate section on Tasmania or the A.C.T. in this part of the report.

QUEENSLAND

Three formal training programs are available in Queensland to Aboriginal students wishing to work in Early Childhood Services:

1. Accredited Teaching awards from tertiary institutions;

2. The Kindercraft Certificate;

3. The Associate Diploma in Child Care;

Each of these is considered here separately:

Accredited Teaching Awards from Tertiary Institutions

A total of 102 Aboriginal students were undertaking teacher education in Queensland in 1980. (15) Of these 2 were enrolled in University courses and 100 in C.A.E.s However, very few of these students were enrolled in E.C.E. programs. The majority of the students (76) were enrolled in the A.I.T.E.P. program at Townsville C.A.E.; an enclave program leading to a Dip.T. The brochure describing this course notes that: "A limited number of final year students may elect to specialise in Early Childhood Education ... Successful completion of this option allows graduates to apply for teaching positions in pre-schools". (16)

The remaining 26 students are enrolled in other C.A.E.s throughout Queensland, having gained entry through normal admission procedures. None of these students was identified as being enrolled in E.C.E. programs, although one Aboriginal student has previously graduated from the Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College.

One further program should be mentioned in this section. 11 students were enrolled in the Islander Teacher Education Course, established through the D.A.I.A. and located at the North Brisbane C.A.E. This course, designed to prepare Islander people to teach on Torres St. Island schools, is a 5 semester non-continuous course, with students attending for 2 periods of 12 months and one of 6 months, interrupted by teaching experience. Successful students are issued with a certificate which "receives no recognition from any institution or organisation, including the C.A.E. which issues it". (17) This course does not include an E.C.E. component, and while it is located at a C.A.E., the course is not recognised as a tertiary program.

There were, then, no Aboriginal students enrolled in Dip.T. (E.C.E.) programs in Queensland, and no existing enclave or special entry programs available (with the exception of the Townsville option).

However, Kelvin Grove C.A.E. submitted a proposal to the Board of Advanced Education in July, 1981, seeking accreditation for an enclave program similar to that operating at Townsville C.A.E., but with an E.C.E. option available within the program. (18)

The Kindercraft Certificate

The major source of training in E.C.E. for Aboriginal students in Queensland is the Kindercraft course, provided through the Kindercraft Association. This is an 18 month course, with an intake of 17 students into each course, leading to a Kindercraft Certificate on successful completion of the course. This course, which is limited to Aboriginal students, is intended to train students to become kindergarten assistants. However, students who complete the course may be employed as trained kindercraft teachers in D.A.I.A. kindergartens. This is not an accredited award, and does not provide entry to, or credit in, any tertiary awards. (19)

Child Care

A two year Associate Diploma of Child Care is offered at the Brisbane Kindergarten Teacher College. Three Aboriginal students were enrolled in this program in 1981. The course is "designed to prepare care givers to provide developmental care for young children, who are separated from their families for long periods of the day in diverse group settings". (20) No status is given to this course in Dip.T. (E.C.E.) programs.

Comments

There appears to be a serious shortage of qualified Aboriginal personnel in Early Childhood Services in Queensland, and a serious need for co-ordinated special training programs. These problems relate to the structure of E.C.E. training programs in Queensland. These programs are provided as disparate, unrelated courses. There appears to be little opportunity for Aboriginal students to work towards accredited E.C.E. qualifications, unless they meet normal entry requirements. At the moment an Aboriginal student not meeting normal entry requirements, and completing all courses in minimal time, would need to work through the following sequence:

Kindercraft Certifice	1 year
Ass. Dip. Child Care	2 years
Dip.T. (E.C.E.)	3 years
Total:	6 years

In the same time, a student meeting normal requirements could complete the following sequence:

B.A.	3 years
B.A. (Hons.)	1 year
Ph.D.	2 years
Total:	6 years

There appears to be a need for:

1. The provision of special entry/enclave programs in E.C.E. leading to a Dip.T. (E.C.E.) and

2. The provision of recognition for credit to be transferred between the K.C.C., the Ass. Dip. C.C., and the Dip.T. programs.

The developments in the Kelvin Grove and Townsville enclave programs should alleviate the first of these problems, but not the second. These issues are discussed further below.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Commonwealth survey records the following numbers of Aboriginal students enrolled in teacher education courses at tertiary levels in N.S.W. in 1980: (21)

University	C.A.E.	Other	Total
50	31	12	93

Of these students, the 50 University enrolments were all undertaking the A.T.A.T.P. (Aboriginal Teaching Assistants Training Program) course at Sydney University. The A.T.A.T.P. course is conducted by the Department of Adult Education at the University of Sydney and involves both work at the University and on-the-job training in the student's own school. The course is normally of one year's duration and leads to a Certificate, awarded at one of three levels. The level III Certificate is recognised as being at least equivalent to H.S.C., and provides entry to tertiary courses. In 1979, A. Duncan noted:

> Of the 29 students who obtained a level III Certificate prior to the beginning of 1979, 17 applied for and gained admission to Universities or Colleges of Advanced Education in N.S.W. 3 of these have now completed the requirements for a Diploma of Teaching; not one of the students has experienced failure in their tertiary courses although 4 have withdrawn for family or personal reasons. (22)

The program is reported by the S.A.A.T.E. as being under review with a view to accrediting the course as an Associate Diploma. However, it should be noted that this program is directed towards aides working in primary schools although the National Meeting on Aboriginal Early Childhood Education estimated that 2 students in the A.T.A.T.P. program were concerned with pre-school assistant training. (23)

The remaining 43 students were undertaking study in C.A.E.s and other tertiary institutions throughout N.S.W. Three students were enrolled in Diploma programs at the Institute of Early Childhood Studies, Sydney C.A.E. The National Meeting on Aboriginal Early Childhood Education, in 1979, estimated that 7 students were enrolled in Diplomas in Early Childhood, (24) while the Commonwealth Department of Education, 1981, noted only 3 Aboriginal students all enrolled at the Institute of Early Childhood Studies. (25) In discussion, a member of the I.E.C.S. indicated a strong interest in further developments in this area. A total of 20 students are recorded by the Commonwealth survey as being enrolled in 3 C.A.E.s in N.S.W. offering E.C.E. programs: Armidale (11 students), Riverina (3), and Mitchell (6). Some of these students may be enrolled in E.C.E. programs.

There were, in 1981, no formal bridging courses offered in N.S.W. for Aboriginal students wishing to enter tertiary institutions other than the A.T.A.T.P. program. Nor were there any special entry/enclave programs leading to teaching qualifications. In noting this, the report "Teachers for Tomorrow" commented:

> At the present time in N.S.W. there are no special programs in this area although one is under consideration, and a small number of indigenous teacher education students are enrolled in standard programs. (26)

The report argues for the establishment of special enclave and support programs, and recommends their establishment in N.S.W. Since the publication of this report, programs have been developed at Armidale C.A.E. and Milperra C.A.E.

Child Care Certificate courses are provided through T.A.F.E. colleges in N.S.W., and in 1979 the N.M.A.E.C.E. estimated that 12 Aboriginal students were enrolled in such courses. (27) Again these courses do not lead to entry into tertiary programs, nor are they recognised for credit purposes.

The Save the Children Fund program in N.S.W., a major employer of Aboriginal assistants in pre-schools, provides in-service training for Aboriginal assistants. However, these do not lead to formal qualifications, and do not provide a career structure.

Comments

As in the case of Queensland, there is a serious shortage of trained Aboriginal Early Childhood Workers, and an urgent need for the development of special entry/enclave programs. Again, there is no continuity between aide training programs, Child Care Certificate Courses, and Dip.T. E.C.E. programs, with the exception of the A.T.A.T.P. program.

VICTORIA

The availability of Early Childhood Services training programs for Aboriginal people, and their involvement in any programs, is extremely limited in Victoria. Fitzgerald (28) provides a detailed report on Aboriginal Teacher Education in Victoria, which should be read in conjunction with the more general reports identified above.

The Commonwealth survey reported 18 Aboriginal students enrolled in Teacher Education programs in Victoria in 1980. (29) A further 12 students were enrolled in a special bridging program operating through the Bendigo C.A.E. The Institute of Early Childhood Development offers a Dip.T. (E.C.E.) and retains two places a year for Aboriginal students. Two Aboriginal students were enrolled in 1981. These are the only

Aboriginal students identified as being enrolled in E.C.E. teacher training programs in Victoria in 1981.

A range of Child Care Courses is offered at T.A.F.E./C.A.E. institutions in Victoria, including one year Child Care Courses for aides, 2 year Certificates of Applied Social Science (Child Care Studies) and 2 year Associate Diplomas in Child Care, with a further one year of study leading to a Diploma in Child Care Services. The Commonwealth Department of Education reports 3 Aboriginal students enrolled in the Certificate of Applied Social Science (Child Care) course in 1981. (30)

The Health Commission of Victoria currently employs 33 Aboriginal assistants in Kindergartens, and provides in-service training and seminars. However, these do not lead to any formal qualifications.

Comments

Again, the provision of Early Childhood training programs, and Aboriginal involvement in such programs, is limited. However, the structure and organisation of courses in Child Care, and their location in tertiary institutions provides a possible base for the development of an orderly sequence, leading to professional qualifications in E.C.E. which need further exploration.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia currently provides the most extensive range of services for training Aboriginal people for working in early childhood services. The Commonwealth survey records 60 Aboriginal students enrolled in Tertiary Teacher Education programs in South Australia in 1980. (31) Included in this number were 51 students enrolled in the A.T.E.P. enclave program at the Adelaide C.A.E. (Underdale) and 6 students enrolled in the special K.U. program at Hartley C.A.E. However, this figure does not include 12 students enrolled in the K.U. bridging course in 1981, nor does it include students enrolled in the Aboriginal Community College. A small number of Aboriginal students are also enrolled in the D.F.E. Child Care Certificate. In addition to these formal tertiary programs, the S.A. Education Department provides an extensive in-service Aboriginal Teacher Aid training program in E.C.E. Each of these programs is described below:

A.T.E.P. (South Australian C.A.E., Underdale Campus)

The A.T.E.P. program at Underdale is a special entry enclave program incorporating an orientation program of one semester, followed by a normal Dip.T, program. Of the 51 students enrolled in the program in 1981, 7 were enrolled in the E.C.E. option. However, of an intake of 10 students who undertook the orientation program in 1981, 9 indicated an intention to enrol in the E.C.E. option, suggesting that 16 Aboriginal students will be enrolled in a Dip.T. (E.C.E.) program in 1982. (32)

This program enrols students who are predominantly from the Adelaide metropolitan area, or areas in close proximity to Adelaide. The program, administered through the Aboriginal Studies and Teacher Education Centre (ASTEC), provides additional tutorial and counselling support, with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff involved.

While the A.T.E.P. is the only program for Aboriginal students offered through A.S.T.E.C. at the moment, an off-campus program for Aboriginal students in the remote areas of the State (Anangu Teacher Education Program: ANTEP) is in an advanced planning stage, and other off-campus teacher education programs (OCTEP) are being considered.

The Kindergarten Union/S.A.C.A.E. (Magill Campus) Program

Under the sponsorship of the K.U., and with the financial support of the D.A.A., an off-campus program in E.C.E., leading to a Dip.T., is being provided through the South Australian C.A.E. (Magill Campus). This program has a number of important characteristics:

1. It is the only special entry program in Australia specifically providing a tertiary E.C.E. qualification for Aboriginal people.
2. It is operating fully off-campus, (predominantly in Port Augusta).
3. Accommodation and tutorial support are being provided off-campus through the K.U. and the D.A.A.
4. In the initial planning of the program, it was intended that students would progress through a sequence of qualifications (Child Care Certificate, Ass. Diploma and Dip.T. (E.C.E.)). However, for a variety of reasons, this plan has not been maintained.

The program had 6 students enrolled in the E.C.E. course in 1981 and a further 2 students enrolled in a D.F.E. C.C.C. A further 12 students were undertaking a bridging course prior to enrolling in the C.A.E. program in 1982. Many of the students have previously been employed as kindergarten aides, and the program involves regular field experience in kindergartens. (33)

After completing the bridging course, students enrolled in the Dip.T. (E.C.E.) program complete the normal sequence of courses for the qualification, although included in that is a major sequence in Aboriginal studies undertaken through A.S.T.E.C., at the Underdale campus of the South Australian C.A.E.

This program has been successful, particularly in Pt. Augusta, where tutorial support and accommodation have been most satisfactory. The strengths of the program lie in (a) the possibility of students undertaking the course as a group, in their home town, (b) the accommodation and tutorial support provided to the students in their home locations, (c) the careful selection processes undertaken and (d) the continuing contact with classrooms in the local areas.

South Australian Education Department

In addition to the formal E.C.E. programs described above, the S.A. Education Department provides an extensive in-service training program for Aboriginal teaching assistants. This program involves on-site training, seminars and conferences, and the development of guides and workbooks. The Education Department is still in the process of further developing these programs, described as the Anangu School Assistant Education Program (ASAEP) to incorporate a wide range of formal courses in administration, language skills, teacher education and general education. It is hoped that this course will lead in to the Anangu Teacher Education Program (ANTEP) currently being developed as an off-campus program at the Underdale campus of the South Australian C.A.E.

Child Care Certificates

The Department of Further Education offers Child Care Certificate courses for students wishing to obtain employment within Child Care. While no specific programs are being offered to Aboriginal students, two Aboriginal students, located at Ceduna, are undertaking Child Care Certificates, under the auspices of the Kindergarten Union program. At the moment Child Care Certificates are not recognised for credit purposes in teacher training programs.

The Aboriginal Community College

While the Aboriginal Community College (A.C.C.) is recognised as an important development in Aboriginal involvement in education, it is not currently involved in areas of Early Childhood Services, although some A.C.C. students have subsequently undertaken tertiary programs.

Aboriginal Task Force, S.A.I.T.

In this context mention should also be made of the Aboriginal Task Force at the South Australian Institute of Technology. This is an enclave program, with 87 Aboriginal students enrolled in 1980, leading to qualifications either in Social Work, (Community Development Certificate, Ass. Diploma in Social Work, B.A. (Social Work), or in Business Studies, (Ass. Diploma in Business Studies, followed by a Bachelors Degree in Business Studies). (34) Although students are not directly involved in Early Childhood studies, many of the students will be involved in aspects of Child Care in subsequent employment as community workers.

Comments

South Australia appears to be further towards providing a well articulated series of programs in Early Childhood qualifications than any other State. By 1982 a total of 34 Aboriginal students are expected to be enrolled in Dip.T. (E.C.E.) programs at the Magill and Underdale campuses of the South Australian C.A.E. Further developments in the S.A. Education Department aide training program, and in the A.N.T.E.P. and O.C.T.E.P. programs at the South Australian C.A.E. should provide a comprehensive teacher education program in South Australia, complemented by the Aboriginal Community College, and the Aboriginal Task Force at S.A.I.T.

The Child Care Certificate programs offered through the D.F.E. appear at the moment to be unnecessarily peripheral to these developments, and perhaps should become incorporated into the currently emerging patterns. However, the experiences in South Australia should provide valuable experience and guidelines for developments in other States. A more detailed evaluation of these developments should provide valuable information for those wishing to develop similar programs in other States.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Commonwealth survey report indicated a total of 53 students enrolled in teacher education programs at the tertiary level in 1980. (35) Of these 37 were enrolled in the enclave program at Mt. Lawley C.A.E., a program leading to a Dip.T. (Primary). A detailed discussion of this program is provided in the report "Training Aborigines as Teachers".(36) However, no Aboriginal students in Western Australia have been identified as enrolled in Dip.T. (E.C.E.) programs, and no special entry or enclave programs were available in 1981.

The W.A. Education Department provides in-service training programs for Aboriginal pre-school aides, and also offers a Basic Child Care Certificate. 26 Aboriginal students were enrolled in this program in 1981. (37) A further Aboriginal trainee course is available to Aboriginal students, who are attached, as supernumeraries, to a kindergarten and become familiar with general routines. Child Care Certificate courses are also available in W.A. The National Meeting on Aboriginal Early Childhood Education estimated that 2 Aboriginal students were enrolled in C.C.C. programs in 1979. (38) Students completing the C.C.C. course may enrol in conversion courses at Churchlands C.A.E. and W.A.I.T., and obtain Dip.T. (E.C.E.) status. This appears to be the only case in Australia in which such conversion courses are available.

Comments

There were no Aboriginal students enrolled in Dip.T. (E.C.E.) courses in W.A. in 1981, and no special entry/enclave programs available.

While a number of Aboriginal students are enrolled in Basic Child Care Certificate courses these do not lead on to professional qualifications and do not provide a career structure. However, the courses leading to conversion of Child Care Certificates to Dip.T. (E.C.E.) may provide a useful model for programs elsewhere in Australia.

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

The issue of Aboriginal teacher education in the N.T. has been considered in some detail in reports by Penny (38), Shimpo (39), and Dukes and Sommerlad. (40) The content of these reports will not be duplicated here. Readers are particularly referred to Penny's report.

Two centres are currently offering teacher education programs in the N.T. - the Darwin Community College and the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program at Batchelor.

While the Dip.T. program at the Darwin Community College offers courses in early childhood education, it does not provide a specialist qualification, nor does it enrol many Aboriginal students. No enclave or special support programs were available, and only "1 or 2" Aboriginal students, from urban areas, have been enrolled, with one Aboriginal student currently enrolled. (41)

The A.T.E.P. program at Batchelor is designed specifically for Aboriginal teachers, and incorporates a "sandwich" structure with multiple useful exits, leading, after 3 years of study, to status as a Band 1 teacher. 51 students were enrolled in the program in 1979. (42) However, students do not, at the moment, obtain a nationally accredited teacher award.

The program does not provide a specialist sequence in early childhood education, although elements of this area are incorporated into the courses offered. The course may be undertaken continuously over 3 years, or sandwiched between years spent back in communities.

Initial enrolments are quite high (58 in 1980, 78 in 1981) but significant numbers of students do not continue through the whole program. Students enrolling are expected to have reasonable English language skills, including literacy. The bulk of enrolments are from the Top End, rather than from the Centre.

The college has recently introduced a first-year "off-campus" program, on communities with 8 or more potential students, enabling students to complete their first year of studies within the local community, with a lecturer being permanently located on the community for this period.

Teacher education programs for Aboriginal pre-schools fall between these two programs, and are not adequately catered for by either. No Child Care Certificate programs are available in the N.T. at the moment.

The Northern Territory Education Department provides some in-service training to Aboriginal teacher aides in pre-schools, and has developed extensive guidelines for teachers and aides to use in developing pre-school teaching skills. (Wangkami, Books I, II, and III). (43)

The problem of obtaining appropriately qualified non-Aboriginal pre-school teachers was commented on extensively in discussions with advisory staff in the N.T. They noted problems in:

1. Obtaining staff with any E.C.E. qualifications. This often meant that pre-schools were staffed by teachers with primary or even secondary qualifications, and

2. The recent developments in E.C.E. programs on N.T. schools demanded skills in community based work, in working with Aboriginal assistants, and in acting in an advisory/resource role, rather than actively working with the children. Existing E.C.E. training programs do not adequately prepare students for such a role.

GENERAL COMMENTS

A number of general conclusions may be drawn from this material:

1. Only 17 Aboriginal students were identified as being enrolled in enclave/special entry programs leading to Dip.T. (E.C.E.) qualifications in 1981. All of these students were enrolled in programs in South Australia.
2. The numbers of Aboriginal students enrolled in Dip.T. (E.C.E.) programs through normal entry procedures was also small, (minimum 5, maximum 19). All of these students were in Victoria or N.S.W.
3. No Aboriginal students were identified as undertaking Dip.T. (E.C.E.) programs in Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania, or the A.C.T.
4. 22 students were identified as being enrolled in Child Care Certificate courses; 12 of these enrolments were in N.S.W.
5. Large numbers of Aboriginal teacher's aides were involved in in-service training programs. However, the extent and quality of these programs varied substantially between States.
6. Bridging programs were available in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. However, only 21 students enrolled in bridging programs in South Australia were committed to continue in E.C.E. programs.

There is, then, an urgent need for a rapid expansion in the provision of E.C.E. and C.C.C. programs for Aboriginal students if there are to be significant numbers of qualified Aboriginal Early Childhood staff by 1990.

There is a clear need for the development of target numbers for these programs, similar to those developed by the N.A.E.C. for primary teachers. We have not attempted to develop such a target in this draft report, and would suggest that State by State targets be established as accurate information on staffing and enrolment numbers in early childhood services become available from the National Data Base, and as accurate population estimates become available from the 1981 Census. We do not feel that the establishment of target figures would be useful without this information.

These general conclusions lead to the consideration of a wide range of complex issues involving the development of training and educational programs for Aboriginal people wishing to be professionally involved in early childhood services. A detailed exploration of these issues has been provided in other reports; Watts, for example, in "Aboriginal Futures" devotes 244 pages to these issues; other reports already referred to in this section also comment on this issue. It is not intended in this report to reproduce these discussions. However, a brief summary of some of the critical issues affecting Early Childhood programs is provided.

Students

The comment is made in a number of reports that the next decade should be considered as a period during which an intensive program should be established to dramatically increase the numbers of qualified Aborigines working in education and related fields. Following this, it is expected that sufficient numbers of Aboriginal students should be able to gain qualifications through normal entry procedures. (44) These comments equally apply to Aborigines in early childhood services.

In obtaining the numbers of students required, it is anticipated that enrolments will draw heavily on mature age students, many of whom will be currently working in related fields, and most of whom will not have normal entry requirements and will need to develop specific skills needed for successful study.

These considerations generate a number of issues:

(a) Funding: Many potential students, currently employed, will not be able to leave their employment unless their salaries, and normal increments can be maintained, and they are guaranteed re-employment on completion of their study.

(b) Location: Many potential students will be resident, with their families, in areas remote from existing education facilities. While not wishing to deny any students freedom to move to locations where facilities are available, it is clear that many potential students will not be able to do this. Some form of on-site programs will be needed if these students are to be able to enrol. The possibility of providing accommodation for students wishing to move into major centres should also be considered.

(c) Selection: Many students will be required to make considerable sacrifices to enrol in training programs. It is essential that selection procedures be devised which will minimise failure rates amongst students. This is important both for students and for the agencies involved. A central component of these selection procedures may well be the use of extensive bridging courses, and the development of program sequences which incorporate multiple useful exits, allowing for early withdrawal with useful qualifications.

(d) The Maintenance of Existing Aboriginal Involvement: The development of the programs envisaged implies that large numbers of Aboriginal people, currently working in the field, will be withdrawn for period of training. If it is accepted that these people are currently making a valuable contribution, then it is essential that strategies be devised which allow for the maintenance of this Aboriginal presence.

(e) Normal Entry Students: The development of special entry/enclave programs should not exclude the possibility of additional support being provided to Aboriginal students entering programs through normal admission procedures.

(f) While we do not have specific information on male and female enrolments in early childhood training programs, we suspect that these are likely to be predominantly female. We further suspect that a large proportion of Aboriginal students enrolled in teacher education courses generally are likely to be female, and to be preparing for Junior Primary level teaching. The desirability and implications of such a trend deserve further scrutiny.

Career Structures

The development of programs for Aboriginal students must be related closely to potential career structures for these students. Four distinct career structures can be identified (although of course these are not mutually exclusive).

1. Professional Employment in Pre-School/E.C.E. Programs

This involves students obtaining accredited teaching qualifications, appropriate to their level of involvement. In most instances this would require a Dip.T. (E.C.E.) or equivalent qualification. However, it should be noted that there are situations in which Aboriginal staff can be employed as teachers, in local contexts, with local qualifications (for example, the Kindercraft Certificate in Queensland, and the A.T.E.P. students in the N.T.). The N.A.E.C. has not been generally supportive of these programs, and argues for the development of nationally accredited awards. (45) It may be possible to build such locally accepted awards into a program structure which ultimately leads to nationally accepted awards.

The development of educational programs should not stop at the provision of awards enabling Aboriginal students to work as classroom teachers. Consideration should be given to the development of programs to encourage Aboriginal involvement in post-graduate programs, as a preparation for employment as advisers, specialist teachers, and administrators.

2. Teacher Aides/Teacher Assistants

In "Aboriginal Futures", Watts devotes a great deal of attention to the position of Aboriginal teacher aides. The nature of these positions remains ambiguous, and at times contradictory, and varies a great deal from State to State. However, it is possible to distinguish between Aboriginal people who are employed to perform the same tasks as regular teacher aides, and Aboriginal people employed because of the special needs of schools with significant Aboriginal enrolment.

While the first of these two practices may be applauded and encouraged, such aides do not appear to need any special training programs beyond those normally provided to teacher aides. However, the second situation is far more complex, and the differences between the two situations should be recognised by the use of different terminology.

This second group of educational workers may be involved in a variety of tasks, including:

-Community/school liaison
-Parent counselling
-Teacher education
-Assisting in classroom teaching
-Translating
-Counselling Aboriginal students
-and so on

These are clearly far more demanding tasks than those placed on regular teacher aides, and suggest that conditions of employment should be different, and that training programs are required.

In most States, Aboriginal aide training programs are the responsibility of the employing authority (although N.S.W., with the course at Sydney University is an exception). The N.A.E.C. recommends that recognised training programs, similar to that in N.S.W., be established in all states.

The development of appropriate training programs could be integrated within teacher education programs. Training programs, leading to appropriate awards could well:

1. provide for improved career prospects

2. act as bridging courses for access to tertiary programs, (and other programs), and

3. provide some status or credit towards Dip.T. (E.C.E.) programs.

These possibilities raise the question of the appropriate training authority, which could be the employing authority, T.A.F.E. institutions, or tertiary institutions. Final determination of this question would rest with the various bodies involved in each State. However, a consistent Australia-wide structure should not be impossible.

3. Child Care

The nature of employment, conditions of service, and training programs in child care facilities vary from State to State. However, Aboriginal people are minimally involved in employment in Child Care Services and indeed are minimal users of such services.

We do not wish at this stage to become involved in the complex, and at times rather acrimonious debate about the relative merits of Child Care and E.C.E. programs, nor the relative levels of training or professionalism of staff involved. However we would point out that:

i) Child Care Certificates do not generally provide Aboriginal people with significant career prospects;

ii) Child Care Certificates do not normally provide access to or credit in Tertiary programs;

iii) Students may complete a Basic Child Care course in W.A. as a teacher aide training program, and a Child Care Certificate may be converted to a Dip.T. (E.C.E.) in two C.A.E.s in Western Australia.

iv) No enclave or special support schemes have been developed for child care certificate courses, with the exception of the Kindergarten Union program in South Australia.

v) We suggest below that consideration be given to incorporating child care programs more closely into other training programs in early childhood service.

4. Aboriginal Early Childhood Centres

Finally, we would wish to note the development of Aboriginal initiated, and Aboriginal run centres, and the training implications of these. The previous three career structures relate to existing, systemic early childhood services, and the programs described are designed for the various kinds of services. However, the centres being developed within Aboriginal communities often do not fit into existing categories, and may demand a particular kind of training program. For example, the centres may incorporate elements of Day Care, Kindergartens, and after-school care, may also serve as women's advisory centres and women's shelters, may perform significant health functions, and may have a very wide age-range of children attending.

We do not wish, in this report, to provide any prescriptions for appropriate programs for staff working in such centres, but would suggest that extensive consultation relating to this issue should begin.

PROGRAMS

All the above comments place some real constraints on the development of educational programs for Aboriginal workers in early childhood. These suggest that programs developed should have the following characteristics:

1. They will incorporate multiple entry points, and multiple useful exit points;

2. the various components of programs should be cumulative;

3. the various components, while cumulative should allow for a variety of career structures;

4. the programs should incorporate the following elements:

Post Graduate Courses	
Dip.T. (E.C.E.)	Tertiary Child Care Awards
Teacher Aide Training	Child Care Certificates
Bridging Courses	

5. these components should be available:

   a) as on-site in-service programs (expecially aide and C.C.C. training)
   b) as enclave, or off-campus special group programs (Dip.T. (E.C.E.)) and C.C. Degree, and
   c) as enclave programs (Post-graduate)

6. The aide training program should incorporate a bridging program providing entry to a Dip.T.

7. The C.C.C. should provide entry to further tertiary studies, and, depending on the nature of the program, could provide some credit towards a Dip.T. (E.C.E.)

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PART 3

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION: FUTURE DIRECTION FOR ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

In this final Part we identify a number of common themes which have emerged from the present survey, and follow these themes through into an analysis of the research questions posed by this report and examine the extent to which available research answers these questions. Finally, some directions for future research are suggested.

The Part is divided into a number of relatively short chapters, each concerned with different aspects of the issues described above.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES IN PRESENT EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES FOR ABORIGINES

In the course of the present study there emerged several themes or common features. In general, there seemed to be a deal of commonality among the States, with many of the issues or problem areas identified emerging repeatedly as each State was examined. The purpose of Part 3 is firstly to summarise and discuss the main features of Aboriginal early childhood education as identified in the present project. The discussion will involve elements of evaluation based on broader principles of Aboriginal education, but often it will be no more than an elucidation of issues or areas of concern expressed in the literature or in interviews.

ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

One of the most obvious features of the pattern of Aboriginal usage of early childhood services found in the present project was the minimal use of any kind of child care facility in most States and the N.T. Thus, Aboriginal participation in early childhood programs is largely restricted to educational services. Because of the general Commonwealth funding for early childhood services (via the Children's Services Program of the OCC) which allocates larger amounts to child care services than to pre-school education, it means that Aborigines are not gaining reasonable access to Government support in a significant area of early childhood services.

Various comments were made by Aborigines and non-Aborigines about reasons for low Aboriginal participation in day care. Often it was suggested that Aborigines did not need care services because of informal family support structures that operated in most Aboriginal communities. But, such comments should be treated with some caution until some kind of systematic attempt is made to assess the child care needs of Aborigines. Certainly it has not been done to date. It is important to note here that when Aboriginal groups establish their own pre-school centres or services usually there is a child care component contained in it (e.g. Murawina in N.S.W., Yappera and Rumbalara in Victoria and Galiwinku Child Care Centre in the N.T.). This suggests that at least some Aboriginal families desire child care services. It also suggests the need for some comprehensive assessment of the needs for early childhood services by Aborigines, including especially an assessment of their child care needs. The simple fact is that little is known at the moment about Aboriginal child care needs.

In terms of Aboriginal participation in pre-school *education* programs, the overall picture is one of considerable diversity and variation. There are areas where by far the great majority of eligible Aboriginal pre-school children are enrolled in the available pre-school and attend regularly. This situation tends to occur in Aboriginal pre-schools, i.e. where the enrolment is exclusively or nearly exclusively Aboriginal. Sometimes this occurs in Aboriginal reserves and sometimes in urban contexts (e.g. Alberton in S.A., Murawina in N.S.W.) Almost invariably when the pre-school is controlled and staffed fully or substantially with Aborigines, the participation rate of Aboriginal children is high. However, there are also situations where white staff (usually working with Aboriginal aides or assistants) have been able to develop a good relationship with their local Aboriginal community and run a program which *satisfies that community.* In many of these situations the participation rates of Aboriginal children are high. Another factor regularly associated with higher Aboriginal participation rates was the availability of transport to bring children to and from pre-schools.

The enrolment patterns of Aboriginal children in each State and the Northern Territory showed a strongly biased distribution. Thus, there were a relatively small number of pre-schools in each State and the N.T. with a very large number of Aboriginal enrolments. However, there were, as well, a comparatively large number of pre-schools with small Aboriginal enrolments (5 or fewer). It was usually (but not always) in situations such as this, that participation rates were lowest. Thus, there were many areas (e.g. country towns) where there was little or no Aboriginal involvement in local pre-school services.

Overall estimate of Aboriginal use of early childhood services

In order to give some overall estimate of the extent to which Aboriginal children use early childhood services, an attempt was made to estimate the proportion of Aboriginal children recorded as enrolled in early childhood facilities (overwhelmingly this means pre-school education). The earlier discussion of participation rates in the N.T. gives an indication of ways in which such a calculation may be made and the difficulties involved (see Chapter 7).

It must be emphasised that the estimates given here are exceedingly rough and are provided only in an attempt to suggest very broad trends. The various calculations of numbers of Aboriginal children in the N.T. (see Chapter 7) showed that the figures from the 1976 census possibly provide as close an approximation as any other method of estimating present population numbers. Therefore, the numbers of Aboriginal children recorded in early childhood services in each State were compared with numbers of children in the 1976 census. The numbers of Aborigines in early childhood services were calculated by totaling children listed in any form of early childhood facility in each State and the Territory. When numbers differed from one source of information to another, the upper estimate was taken. The results are presented in Table 6 .

TABLE 6

Estimates of Numbers of Aboriginal Children in Early Childhood Services

	NSW	ACT	TAS	NT	SA	VIC	Q	WA	TOTAL
ABS, 1976 census									
3 year olds	1289	37	90	831	290	429	1389	830	5186
4 year olds	1305	20	86	849	308	377	1358	831	5138
Aborigines in early childhood services	1200	15	*	908	350	112	1356	1766	5707
Estimated proportion of 4 year olds	68	46	*	80	84	22	74	71	68

* see text

Table 6 gives the total number of Aboriginal 3 and 4 year olds as shown in the 1976 census. As stated, these seem to provide the best possible estimate of present numbers, even though they are clearly inadequate. No-one suggests the 1976 census provided a good assessment of 1976 numbers; therefore it must give an even less adequate measure of present numbers. Also shown in the table are total numbers of Aboriginal children in all types of early childhood services, obtained from the State descriptions in Chapters 5 to 11. Lastly, Table 6 gives an estimated proportion of 4 year olds in early childhood services. The proportions were calculated as follows. Most States did not specify separate statistics for three and four year olds/or younger children in pre-school facilities. However, the N.T. does have details for three year olds and four year olds separately. Their figures show that 26 percent of pre-school enrolments in the N.T. are three year olds. This proportion was then applied to the enrolments of pre-school children in NSW, ACT, SA, Vic., and Q to give an estimate of numbers of four year olds. What evidence there was available from these States suggested the 26 percent estimate was a reasonable approximation although in SA it may have slightly underestimated numbers of three year olds.

The first impression from Table 6 is that in those States (and in the N.T.) with substantial numbers of Aboriginal children (namely NSW, NT, Queensland and WA) there is evidence that possibly up to three quarters of Aboriginal four year olds are enrolled in some form of pre-school service. The figure of 71 percent for WA may be an underestimate as it was not possible to separate out four year olds and five year olds. Hence, in WA the figure of 71 percent is the proportion of all Aboriginal children aged 3, 4 and 5 years. It is likely that the proportion of four and five year olds enrolled would be higher than 71 percent and the proportion of three year olds less than

71 percent.

In the States with smaller numbers of Aboriginal children (ACT, TAS, SA and Vic) there is some diversity. In SA the level of Aboriginal involvement seems to be comparable with the large States. However, there is some evidence of Aboriginal enrolment in pre-school facilities in Victoria being lower than most other States. The figures for the ACT are so small that it is unwise to place much weight on the estimated proportion of 46 percent. No figures were available for Tasmania.

An overall estimate for Australia can be obtained by totalling the estimated number of four year olds attending pre-school facilities in each State and comparing with the national figure for 4 year olds. As it is not possible to separate four and five year olds in WA, WA has to be excluded from this calculation. In this way it was estimated that 2920 Aboriginal four year olds are attending pre-school facilities in Australia (excluding WA) with a total population of 4307 (again excluding WA). Thus, the overall estimated proportion of Aboriginal four year olds attending pre-school facilities in Australia is 68 percent. From earlier comments on WA, it is possible that if WA were included in this figure it would rise slightly. The overall value of 68 percent needs to be compared with estimates from most States of Australia that general levels of participation in pre-school facilities is currently running at over 90 percent of the population of four year olds.

When findings from both the National Data Base on pre-school services and the 1981 census are available, far more accurate estimates of numbers of Aboriginal children in early childhood services will be able to be made. Until then, the crudeness of the present estimates must again be emphasised. Nevertheless they do show that substantial increases in Aboriginal participation in early childhood services have been made in the last 15 years. Also, they suggest there is still some considerable scope for further increases before Aboriginal usage reaches the overall rate for the population at large, in both pre-schools and day care.

If an aim of Aboriginal early childhood education in Australia is to increase overall levels of participation in such services, then there would appear to exist sufficient examples of existing programs with high participation rates to use as models for the development and modification of services. There seems to be a need for research into the factors associated with high and low participation rates to guide the development of programs.

AUTHORITY AND CONTROL IN ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

By and large pre-school services in Australia are controlled and/or run by centrally administered Government bodies (such as a State Education Departments) or large organisations (e.g. the Kindergarten

Union). Most Aboriginal pre-school services are provided by these agencies. Therefore, decisions about the development, staffing, goals, etc. of programs are typically made by agencies whose main services in most cases are not for Aboriginal children (DAIA in Queensland is an exception), but for the community in general. These same agencies tend to maintain policies that Aboriginal groups should have equal access to early childhood services but that Aboriginal services should not be seen as a separate category.

A consequence of the way in which Aboriginal pre-school services are administered and delivered is that Aboriginal communities have relatively little effective involvement in the determination of the characteristics of the services at an official level. Informal arrangements in individual cases have sometimes evolved to give Aboriginal groups partial control. This has occurred in some instances, where the role of the Aboriginal assistant in individual pre-schools has been conceived rather broadly so that the assistants may virtually be responsible for the design and implementation of the program.

But, the important point from a survey of Australia is that at this time Commonwealth Government policies on Aboriginal self-management have been implemented to a limited extent. Thus, the policy statement from the D.A.A. that Aborigines "must be involved in the programs that concern them and must determine their own priorities, develop initiatives and take responsibility for the decisions they make" could be said to have been implemented in only limited ways. Why this is the case is not entirely clear, but several factors seem to have contributed. For example, the policy is only recent in origin and some would argue that the mechanisms for its implementation are far from clear. As well, the policy has been formulated against a background of a history in which Aborigines were given virtually no self-management, and must be implemented by persons and institutions who have limited experience of carrying out such a policy.

Aboriginal authority and control is also restricted in most States and the Northern Territory partly because of an absence of Aborigines with teaching qualifications. This means that in most pre-schools the person in charge is a trained white teacher. Until more Aborigines gain qualifications and become directors of pre-schools or until funding structures and models of pre-schools are changed to enable Aborigines to run their own pre-schools without formal teacher training, it seems inevitable that the authority and control in pre-schools will not lie with Aboriginal groups.

As already noted, there are a number of examples throughout Australia of initiatives by Aboriginal groups where these groups now have full responsibilities for their own service. Aboriginal groups throughout Australia have argued strongly and repeatedly for more such Aboriginal pre-schools, controlled by and run for Aborigines. This was one of the key issues that emerged in the course of the present project.

FUNDING

Funding of Aboriginal early childhood services is shared by the States and the Commonwealth. A substantial proportion of Aboriginal children are in facilities or programs funded by States as part of their general support for pre-school education. This is supplemented to a significant degree by Commonwealth funding from D.A.A. and the O.C.C. Independent organisations (e.g. SCF) also make a contribution. From Aboriginal viewpoints it is also important to note that the funding of programs is overwhelmingly controlled by non-Aboriginals.

The funding position is recognised by most people working in the early childhood field as being confused. The confusion at times leads to difficulties in the provision of services and Aboriginal groups often find it very difficult to obtain support for early childhood services they wish to provide. Some of the confusion in funding arises from the *variety* of funding sources and range of agencies involved in early childhood services e.g. in Queensland services are provided by the Education Department, D.A.I.A., and the C. and K. Association, with funds coming from the Children's Services Program, State Government support for education, the O.C.C. and the D.A.A. At times the roles of various organisations involved are unclear and this seems to lead to divided responsibilities. The main problem appears to be disagreement between the Commonwealth and the States over responsibility for early childhood education services, in general, and for Aborigines.

The fact that the Commonwealth has been reducing relative contributions to early childhood services, and especially pre-school education, since 1974 has placed more pressure on the States. The result has been a considerable tightening of funding in the early childhood field. The division of responsibilities for Aboriginal early childhood services is even greater than for early childhood in general. There is a tendency for the States to see Aboriginal early childhood services as a Commonwealth responsibility via its responsiblity for Aboriginal programs. According to this view, the D.A.A. should be the main source of funds for Aboriginal early childhood services. On the other hand, however, the D.A.A. sees its role (see page 49) as working in conjunction with the States to fund Aboriginal programs. In addition, there is some tendency for the D.A.A. to conceive of Aboriginal early childhood services as being chiefly in the realm of *education*, which is a responsibility of the States.

The conclusion which must be reached from an overview of the funding of Aboriginal early childhood services in Australia is that the situation is fragmented and responsibility is divided. This picture tends to work against Aboriginal groups trying to initiate their own programs.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The most obvious feature of early childhood programs for Aborigines is the considerable diversity in types of programs operating around Australia. The diversity arises from a variety of sources:

(a) differences in beliefs about the goals or purposes of early childhood programs;

(b) differences in the situation in which the service is delivered, because the characteristics or needs of the Aboriginal community may differ; and

(c) individual differences arising from the characteristics of the actual personnel responsible for the design and delivery of the program.

Although program differences can be observed in fairly obvious ways (e.g. in terms of the language used in the pre-school, whether staff are white or black, who makes decisions about the curriculum, the activities children engage in, the amount of Aboriginal content in the program, etc.) it is certainly not true to say that we have available a comprehensive description of various types of programs based on research of an observational nature. Equally, there is virtually no available research findings on the outcomes of different types of programs. At present, descriptions of programs are limited mainly to anecdotal reports by teachers or advisers. Advances in early childhood services for Aborigines are likely to be aided by more knowledge of types of programs and their likely or possible outcomes. This is clearly one area of needed research.

Despite the fact that programs appear to differ so greatly among themselves, there seems to be a relatively limited range of objectives being pursued. These include:

(a) the general health and welfare of the child and/or the family;

(b) the enhancement of the child's subsequent school success, and

(c) the enhancement of the child's Aboriginal identity and the Aboriginal culture in general.

At times, however, the goals chosen for individual programs are either confused or contradictory. A special difficulty seems to apply to the last two objectives. Although repeated claims have been made about the need for early childhood programs for Aboriginal children because it is believed it will improve their subsequent performance in school, there is as yet no agreement on the type of program in early childhood that should be run if subsequent school success is to be enhanced. Thus, some programs focus on the development of standard English, believing this will improve the child's school success. In contrast, there are many bi-lingual programs, designed on the assumption that basic literacy and cognitive skills will be more easily acquired in the child's first language and that this will help in subsequent schooling. Other programs focus mainly on general socialisation into the culture of the school, and/or attempt to develop the child's self-concept in academic areas.

Programs that have goals for improving subsequent school performance and developing Aboriginal identity and fostering Aboriginal culture seem to face special difficulties. Superficially, it seems these two kinds of goals may be in conflict. It would be helpful for the future development of programs to have available:

(a) observational data about how to conduct a program with these two kinds of goals, and

(b) evaluations of the outcomes of such programs in the areas of the two sets of goals.

STAFFING

The staffing pattern for Aboriginal early childhood services shows some uniformity throughout Australia. White staff trained in early childhood (usually teaching) direct most programs in which Aboriginal children attend. In many programs Aboriginal staff are also involved, in subsidiary roles such as aides or assistants, cooks, bus drivers, etc. The potential for Aboriginal influence or control in early childhood programs is affected by their lack of formal qualifications and their subsidiary roles. Nevertheless, in individual cases (in all States and the Northern Territory) there are examples where the white staff have developed a working relationship with Aboriginal aides or assistants of a more equal nature so that Aboriginal influence on the programs has been considerable.

The lack of qualifications of Aborigines has already been commented on as a factor in the difficulties faced by Aborigines in initiating their own programs or in attempting to gain more control over existing programs. It has also been noted that for many situations in Aboriginal communities, the kinds of qualifications and training presently available in early childhood may not be very appropriate.

An issue that arose repeatedly throughout Australia concerned the role of the Aboriginal Assistants in early childhood programs. A wide range of roles were argued for in relation to the Assistants e.g. as mediators between the pre-school and the Aboriginal community as a teacher of Aboriginal culture, and as a person carrying out the normal duties of a pre-school aide. For a variety of reasons, Aboriginal Assistants were often not fulfilling their suggested role of agent of the Aboriginal community and culture. In many cases, this occurred because the Aboriginal Assistant was not personally suited or qualified for such a role nor was she trained for the role.

ABORIGINAL INITIATIVES

There has been a small, but significant number of programs which have developed as independent Aboriginal intiatives over the last ten years. While this project has not examined those programs in any depth we believe they hold a number of important implications for the development of programs for Aboriginal children.

(1) The programs provide valuable evidence for the demands of Aboriginal communities for appropriate early childhood services.

(2) A brief examination of these programs suggests that they are structured very differently from existing western programs, incorporating elements of child care, pre-school, mothers' centres, health services, nutritional services and after-school care, in combinations which do not match existing systemic program characteristics.

(3) All of these programs have indicated significant difficulties in obtaining funding and registration.

(4) Many of them have noted problems in obtaining appropriate staff.

As we indicate further below, we believe that these programs may well provide valuable guidelines for other communities wishing to establish programs.

CHAPTER 16

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter we wish to elaborate on some of the themes identified in the analyses of the current situation in Australia as summarised in the previous chapter, placing them within a more general theoretical context by raising a series of research questions, which we believe to be important. In these final chapters we examine the extent to which existing research can provide answers to these questions, and generate some research suggestions which may be useful in directing subsequent research in this area.

It is not our intention to provide a comprehensive review of the research and literature, since this has already been done by Watts, (1), instead we have attempted to draw out the implications of research, to identify areas of relevance and to comment on gaps in knowledge, using, where appropriate, illustrative examples and commenting at times on areas of research which we believe are relevant, but which have not been included in the Watts report.

The first question that must be answered is "Why do research at all?" There are a variety of reasons why research has been undertaken with Aboriginal groups, including:

- to further "pure knowledge" within academic disciplines, (e.g. Anthropological research into kinship structures);
- to provide administering bodies with information needed to further their policies on Aboriginal affairs;
- to identify specific issues or problem areas and to establish appropriate remedial programs (e.g. research into trachoma);
- to further the careers of those undertaking the research (Watts notes 295 theses relevant to Aboriginal education);
- to provide Aboriginal communities with information which they need to further their own programs of development.

We have taken as our starting point this final goal - that the primary purpose of research into Aboriginal early childhood should be the provision of information which will enable Aboriginal communities to obtain appropriate early childhood services. In taking this position we are in accord with the N.A.E.C. aims on research "Aboriginal education research must be of direct benefit to Aborigines" (2)

As we shall note throughout this section, we do not believe the bulk of research undertaken with Aboriginal subjects has been of any real benefit to Aboriginal communities. We support the comments by Watts (3) that research into the field of Aboriginal education demands a major reappraisal of goals, methodology, funding and organisation, if it is to provide Aboriginal communities with the knowledge and skills needed.

These kinds of comments have been a common theme in a number of recent articles and reports and need not be repeated here. However, we would suggest that such a reorientation of research need not exclude the various other goals which may be established for such research, and indeed, is likely to enhance achievements of those alternate goals described above. However, we would reiterate our belief that priority must be given to the goal of providing Aboriginal communities with the knowledge they need.

The themes identified in the previous section can be grouped under three general areas:

1. Control and authority in Early Childhood Services

2. The goals of Early Childhood Services

3. The structure and content of programs

This chapter is concerned with examining the questions raised under these three headings, while the final chapters look at some of the available answers.

CONTROL AND AUTHORITY IN ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

We have already noted the widespread reference to the need for Aboriginal communities to have significant control over and authority in the development of early childhood services for their communities. We have also noted that at the moment they do not have such control and authority. A number of questions emerge from this:

> What are the significant elements in the provision of early childhood services in Australia which restrict Aboriginal access to control and authority?
>
> How are terms such as control, authority and involvement to be interpreted in practice? What are the actual meanings of such terms, in the context of Early Childhood Services, and what are the benefits which can be obtained from these?
>
> How might the structure and administration of early childhood services be altered in order to significantly increase levels of Aboriginal control and authority?

We consider these to be central questions, and suggest that the development of early childhood services for Aboriginal communities will be impaired if answers are not obtained.

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

The establishment of goals for Aboriginal Early Childhood Services is a complex task. This complexity arises from a number of sources. Historically, these goals have been set for Aboriginal communities by non-Aboriginal individuals or organisations. These goals have, at times, been unrealistic, contradictory, and unacceptable to Aboriginal people. This has been compounded by the diversity across Aboriginal communities throughout Australia which is such that different communities may well establish different goals for children's services. Indeed, we would also note the possibility of substantial differences of opinion within Aboriginal communities.

We would suggest that the establishment of goals for programs requires answers to three questions:

> What are the goals which Aboriginal communities, and individuals within those communities, establish for early childhood services?
>
> What forms of early childhood services do Aboriginal communities wish to develop?
>
> To what extent are there specific areas of need which may be alleviated by early childhood services?

Obtaining answers to these questions is likely to be a complex task, as different answers to these questions are likely to be provided by different communities, and indeed by individuals within communities. The answer to the second question depends, to a significant degree, on the answers to the first question; and while answers to the first two questions can only be obtained from Aboriginal people, answers to the third question may be obtained from a variety of sources.

We elaborate further on these problems in the next chapter.

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF PROGRAMS

There is a complex and reciprocal relationship between the establishment of goals for early childhood services, and the construction of programs to achieve those goals. The establishment of realistic goals must be based on knowledge of what is possible. However, comments about what is possible must be related back to what is desired and needed.

We see two broad areas of concern here:

> What kind of research evidence is available to allow for the construction of programs designed to achieve the goals established for the programs? and
>
> What kind of research is available to allow communities to predict the effects of the introduction of various kinds of early childhood programs into Aboriginal communities?

We believe this is an important distinction to bear in mind in the development of early childhood programs. The introduction of a program which may be directed towards very specific goals, such as language development, may have a wide range of unintended outcomes, perhaps through cutting across kinship relationships, changing authority structures, changing child-parent interaction, altering economic relationships through the employment of Aboriginal staff, and so on.

Clearly the research questions to be posed in both of these areas cannot be answered in any detail without prior knowledge of the goals of the programs. However, it is possible to indicate the range of contexts within which such questions may be sought. These contexts, and the available evidence, are considered in the next chapter.

We have established these research questions in roughly the sequence within which they should be answered. This sequence involves three stages: first, the establishment of significant levels of Aboriginal control and authority over the development of early childhood services, secondly, the construction of appropriate and achievable goals for these programs, and finally, the development of programs to achieve these goals.

As a final comment here, we would note that the diversity across Aboriginal communities is such that individual communities may well need to work through these stages, developing local answers to these questions, and that some Aboriginal communities have already undertaken these tasks and are operating independent programs. Communities should be able to benefit from the experience gained by other communities in undertaking these tasks. We would further note that the position of Aboriginal families living beyond Aboriginal communities (the N.A.E.C. "urban dispersed" group) present a particular, distinctive set of problems.

In the next chapter we turn to a consideration of the extent to which the existing literature can provide answers to the questions raised above.

REFERENCES

1. Watts, B.H. Aboriginal Futures: Review of Research and Related Policies in the Education of Aborigines, Canberra, 1981

2. National Aboriginal Education Committee. Submission to the National Inquiry into Teacher Education, 1979

3. Watts, (1981), Chapter 19, pp. 1220-1261

CHAPTER 17

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

In considering the conclusions which may be drawn from the existing research, we have used two general categories described in the previous chapter; Control and Authority, and the Nature and Purposes of Early Childhood Services. The following chapter examines issues relating to the Structure and Content of Programs.

CONTROL AND AUTHORITY

The issue of Aboriginal control and authority over the provision of early childhood services is part of the broader issue of the relationship between Aborigines and the major institutions of Australian society (including social welfare, health services, legal systems, financial institutions, political structures, and so on). The nature of these relationships has been the subject of a great deal of research. Some outstanding examples of this literature include writings by Eggleston (1), Tatz (2), Coombs (3), Rowley (4), Stevens (5), and many others.

This research allows a number of general conclusions to be drawn which may be related to the relationships between Aborigines and Early Childhood Services.

(1) The dominant institutions are structured around western values and goals, reflecting the wishes, needs, and characteristics of the dominant white culture. These often flatly contradict Aboriginal values, goals and characteristics.

(2) The administration of these institutions is overwhelmingly non-Aboriginal, and is substantially drawn from that stratum of Australian society which supports the dominant values.

(3) Decision-making within these institutions, both in the formulation and the implementation of policy, has been based on these values. This includes decisions about the establishment of goals, staffing, patterns of service, funding structures and so on.

(4) Problems and solutions have been constructed within western value systems, providing both definitions of problems and solutions, which are often not accepted by Aboriginal people.

(5) Historically, there has been little attempt to establish any adequate communication between these institutions and their "clients".

(6) Aboriginal involvement within these institutions has been based on a number of factors, including a lack of knowledge within the Aboriginal community of how these institutions operate, and a consequent inability to influence their operation, a lack of formal qualifications which would enable Aboriginal people to apply for and obtain positions of responsibility within the institutions, and the belief within Aboriginal communities that these institutions are basically hostile to Aboriginal interests and that staff within the institutions are hostile to Aboriginal people.

To what extent are these characteristics applicable to education generally, and to early childhood services in particular? There has been no significant research undertaken into Aboriginal authority and control in education which allows for any confident assertion that these characteristics do or do not apply. However, we would note that there is abundant evidence that Aborigines are not represented in positions of authority within the educational systems, as teachers, administrators or members of parent bodies (6), (7). This clearly relates, at least in part, to a lack of formal qualification. We would also note that there is some evidence that Aboriginal parents have little awareness of the details of how schooling functions in Australian society. As Watts notes in her survey of research into Aboriginal parental attitudes towards education:

> The clear picture which emerges from the research studies is lack of knowledge on the part of many, but again not all Aboriginal parents of the school, its program and its workings (8).

Watts also indicates that Aboriginal parents have positive attitudes towards education, noting that this is "primarily a utilitarian orientation; education leads to better jobs and more secure lives" (9). However, she also notes Aboriginal parents may have become disenchanted with education over recent years, but indicates that there is no substantive evidence bearing on this.

There is also scattered and unsatisfying evidence on the nature of the relationship between the Australian school system and Aboriginal communities. There is insufficient research to allow for significant conclusions to be drawn about:

- the nature and impact of institutional values expressed in the operation of the school systems;
- the values, attitudes and operations of policy-making bodies, and significant authority figures;
- the values and attitudes of teachers;
- the impact of these characteristics on Aboriginal parents.

Watts (10), summarises the sketchy research which does exist, but comments frequently on the inadequacy of this material. This lack of research material is particularly apparent at the level of early childhood programs.

Despite this lack of a research base, comments about the lack of Aboriginal authority and control in education and the need for such control are widespread in the literature. Two examples will suffice here. Watts, summarising 27 reports and national conferences on Aborigines between the years 1971-1978 notes that:

> Every one of the reports sets out recommendations for one or more types of action designed to foster achievement of the goal of self-determination, self-management and responsibility. (11)

Brandl, in her submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (12) comments:

> Who is best placed to define the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres St. Islanders and then consider any environmental, social and cultural factors which might affect these? ... throughout the history of Aboriginal education that question - as far as formal schooling is concerned - has been posed and answered by non-Aborigines. Schools, curricula and total school systems have been established on non-Aboriginal definitions of the educational needs of Aboriginal children ... certainly (Aborigines) have no control in schools, nor feel they have any, even though advisory committees exist. The teaching methodologies, the norms of the classroom and probably the aims and objectives of the teachers are not understood and are far from shared by Aborigines. The school and its environment are alien to them.

We would suggest that Brandl's full submission be read in conjunction with this report.

Many government and non-government agencies have recognised both the need for, and lack of Aboriginal involvement in decision-making processes. We have noted in chapter 4 the policies of the D.A.A. and Commonwealth Education Department in relation to this issue. The Federal Government policy on Aboriginal Affairs stresses Aboriginal self-management. However, as Watts notes, with reference to the implementation of these policies:

> The extent to which the goal of self-determination has been achieved remains to be determined. Certainly, the review of the situation would suggest only very slow and uneven progress. (13)

In contrast to these comments we would note that over the last few years a number of developments has occurred which should lead to increased Aboriginal involvement in, if not authority over, educational programs. These include:

(a) the development of the N.A.E.C. as a national advisory body;

(b) the development of various state advisory committees;

(c) the very substantial increase in the numbers of Aboriginal teacher aides employed throughout Australia;

(d) the development of various enclave programs designed to prepare Aboriginal teachers, and

(e) the emergence of various educational programs under direct Aboriginal control.

We are aware of no research evidence indicating the effectiveness of these developments in the provision of Aboriginal control or authority in education.

In summary, then, we would suggest that there is a widespread belief that Aboriginal communities and individuals have little authority and control within the Australian education system. While there is little direct research evidence supporting this statement, there is a sufficient body of anecdotal reporting, of research in other areas, and of individual comment, to suggest that these beliefs are probably justified.

There have been some attempts to alleviate this situation recently. There is no evidence available to indicate whether those attempts have been or are likely to be, successful. There has been no research evidence which allows for the generation of strategies to improve Aboriginal levels of authority and control.

We suggest below that the last of these comments leads to some specific research needs, structured around two broad questions which we believe are still unresolved.

(1) While comments and policies about self-management, self-determination, authority and control are widespread, there has been little attempt to specify, in detail, just what these terms mean. The concept of control is not an absolute, as terms such as "significant levels of control" indicate. There is a serious need for clarification of what these terms mean within the context of early childhood education.

(2) Despite the existence, for a number of years, of policies of Aboriginal self-management, Aboriginal involvement, Aboriginal consultancy, and so on, there is little evidence of any detailed awareness of precisely how these policies are to be implemented within the field of early childhood services. There is still an outstanding need for research into the barriers and difficulties involved in implementing these policies; research specifically directed towards establishing programs for the successful implementation of these policies.

THE NATURE AND PURPOSES OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The questions to be considered in this section revolve around the need for Aboriginal Children's Services. What are the purposes of these programs? We have suggested above that three questions are significant here: (1) Do Aboriginal communities and individuals want access to early childhood programs? (2) If so, what do they want these programs to achieve, and what kinds of programs do they consider to be appropriate? and (3) To what extent can specific areas of need be identified which early childhood programs can alleviate?

As we have indicated earlier, the answers to questions (1) and (2) can only be obtained from Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal individuals. We are aware of no research undertaken with Aboriginal communities which allows us to provide answers to either of these two questions. As previously noted, the variety across Aboriginal communities suggests that this information needs to be collected at the level of individual communities. At the moment no such research, relating to early childhood services, has been undertaken. However, the report of the Aboriginal Children and Families Heritage Project, undertaken by Brandl and Snowden, has recently become available and provides some valuable insights into the attitudes and aspirations of the groups involved. Despite this general lack of research evidence, there exists a wide range of comment by individual Aboriginal people, by various Aboriginal agencies and from various conferences indicating that:

(i) Aboriginal communities do express a wish for early childhood services,

(ii) the goals which they establish for these services are varied but may be grouped in the following categories: to improve school success by improving cognitive and linguistic skills; to improve school success by enhanced self-concept and identity; to improve school success by gradually socialising Aboriginal children into the culture of the school; to provide a contact for maintaining and strengthening Aboriginality in children; to provide a child care service for families and communities in need of such services; to provide health and nutritional services to young children and their parents; to provide a centre, or focus, for community development.

However, we do not have any information which indicates the extent to which specific communities may accept some, all or none of these goals; nor do we know what order of priority they would establish for such programs. Indeed, we do not know whether these programs would be given higher or lower priority than, say, adult education programs.

(iii) A number of Aboriginal communities have expressed their wishes through the development of independent early childhood programs. These programs should provide valuable information about the goals and program characteristics established by these communities.

This third question raises the complex issue of the relationship between wants and needs, by asking to what extent can needs not recognised by Aboriginal communities be clarified by external agencies or individuals, and alleviated by early childhood programs. We have identified two broad areas within which this process of clarification may be examined: (a) the relationships between Aboriginal children and early childhood programs, and (b) the relationships between Aboriginal communities and early childhood programs.

Aboriginal Children and Early Childhood Programs

Three broad areas of concern may be identified within this context: (i) Child Health, (ii) School Attainment, (iii) Cultural Identity.

To what extent can existing research literature identify specific needs within these areas which may be alleviated by early childhood services?

(i) Health

There is a very extensive body of literature dealing with the health of Aboriginal children. This literature is well-documented and will not be duplicated here. It involves research into morbidity and mortality rates, nutritional status, upper and lower respiratory tract infections, gastro-intestinal disorder, parasitic infestations, trachoma, biochemical abnormalities, and so on. The findings clearly indicate that Aboriginal children are vulnerable to a large number of health problems, and that a significant proportion could be alleviated through the provision of appropriate early childhood programs. Elements of such programs which could contribute to the health status of children might include:

- early diagnosis and treatment of specific health problems;
- maternal educational programs (e.g. the nutritious meals programming operated by the A.E.F. in Adelaide);
- improved nutrition through the provision of meals.

(ii) School Attainment

There is little doubt that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are looking to early childhood programs to provide assistance in improving the chances of Aboriginal children succeeding in primary and secondary schools, and are looking to the research literature to suggest how this might be achieved. This single issue has dominated research in the field of Aboriginal education (and indeed has been a major issue in educational research in western cultures generally) over the last two decades. It is not our intention here to attempt to review either the research, or the complexities of such research. We would note the reviews provided by the Commonwealth Department of Education (14) identifying major overseas studies, and the detailed survey of the Australian literature provided by Watts (15). The questions we wish to ask here are:

1. Has this body of research identified specific areas of need within Aboriginal children which significantly impede their levels of school achievement?

2. Are these areas of need such that they can be alleviated by early childhood programs?

The identification of areas of need in relationship to school achievement requires some analysis of the determinants of levels of school achievement by Aboriginal children. Watts (16) notes that the range of possible determinants of success and failure is very wide, that the relationships between these variables are complex and that research into these complex relationships is not sufficient to allow any substantive conclusions to be drawn. As she concludes:

> While the studies shed some light on the association of these variables with school outcomes, we have as yet no satisfactory answers to the questions:
>
> - In what circumstances are Aboriginal children likely to be successful at school?
>
> - What is the relative importance for Aboriginal school success of home/community and school? (17)

Research into the cognitive and psycholinguistic characteristics of Aboriginal children has dominated this area of study in the last two decades, and has been used to provide much of the rationale for the development of pre-school programs for Aboriginal children. However, this research has a number of characteristics which render it of doubtful utility in providing any basic information for the development of programs:

- Most research has been concerned with examining either levels of school achievement or the characteristics of Aboriginal children. Such research provides us with little useful information about the relationship between these two groups of variables.

- Most research has examined a very small number of variables, ignoring the point, stressed by Watts, that the relationship between the wide range of variables involved is complex, is unlikely to be linear, and is likely to be excluded by most research.

- The bulk of the research was undertaken ten or more years ago. The conditions of Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal schooling have changed substantially over this period, and it is possible, indeed likely, that both pupil characteristics and levels of school achievement may have changed significantly over this period.

- This emphasises the point that this research has not been longitudinal, ethnographic or multi-disciplinary in nature. In general it has consisted of "one-shot" studies, using various psychometric techniques, based on a specific disciplinary framework, usually psychological, usually behaviourist.

- There are serious theoretical problems in the application of western psychometric techniques to Aboriginal children. While this is not the place to examine these problems in detail, we would note, and support, concern which has been expressed about (i) the validity of normative, prescriptive and culture-specific modes of child development, (ii) the reliability of the various tests used, and (iii) the generalisability of results obtained.

In drawing conclusions from this research we have noted the comments by Wilmott (18)

> Dr Harry Penny, an elder statesman of Australian education, commented recently that:
>
> > 'No matter what one thinks about schooling,
> > schooling remains the only educational strategy,
> > which we know, which allows people to make
> > unprecedented jumps in the development of
> > human abilities'
>
> This statement may be quite unacceptable to many people, but if it is to be assumed true, then there are two aspects which any society opting for schooling ought to consider:

> 1. The society should consider whether or not it particularly wishes its children to make these 'unprecedented jumps'.
>
> 2. Perhaps a worse consequence is to opt for these 'unprecedented jumps' and not get them.
>
> There is considerable argument among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators as to whether or not Aboriginal society has fallen foul of the first of these consequences. It is almost certain that the vast majority of Aboriginal people have been caught with the second.

We believe that Wilmott is sounding a warning note which must be taken very seriously and in the light of such a warning, we do not believe that psychological research undertaken with Aboriginal children has provided any consistent evidence that levels of school success and failure can be related to any particular characteristics or deficits in Aboriginal children. This, as we note further below, has major implications for the development of early childhood services.

(iii) Cultural Identity

The concept of "identity" is a complex one, used in many different ways, by different writers, with terms such as 'identity', 'self-concept', 'Aboriginality', 'cultural identity', 'ethnicity' and so on, being used in a variety of inconsistent ways. Again, we do not propose to examine the research into these areas in any detail, and refer readers to Watts' review of this area.

The crucial question concerning us here is whether the research literature in this area provides any consistent evidence for specific areas of disadvantage or deficit in Aboriginal children which may be ameliorated by early childhood programs. Again, we believe the answer has to be no - the literature does not provide such evidence. However, in saying this, we note that the literature is minimal, is non-cumulative, and does not allow any firm conclusions either way.

While a number of specific projects (e.g. Watts (19), de Lemos (20)) provide valuable information on specific areas (such as self-concept for specific communities), the general field of research is too fragmented to permit any substantive generalisable conclusions to be drawn.

Aboriginal Communities and Early Childhood Programs

This second area is concerned with the extent to which the research literature has identified specific community needs which may be ameliorated by early childhood services. There are two groups of needs which may be considered here; parent needs, and community needs.

(i) Parent Needs

There is a substantial and well-documented body of literature indicating that Aboriginal families in many areas of Australia suffer from extreme poverty, poor housing, high unemployment levels, and a variety of social problems stemming from these. Included in these problems are:

- significant numbers of single-parent families,
- significant numbers of families where parents are working,
- high levels of maternal and paternal stress.

There have been no sustained attempts in the literature to relate these problem areas to child care needs. In many situations it is likely that extended family and kinship networks provide support which ameliorates the possible damaging effects of these factors on children. The very low usage of Child Care Services by Aboriginal people may in part reflect these community support systems. We are doubtful that these support systems are accessible to all Aboriginal parents, and suspect that there may be significant numbers of Aboriginal families in need of child care services who are not utilising such services. While there has been no direct research indicating the extent of this need, these needs have been considered sufficiently pressing to lead to the production of such reports as "The First Aboriginal Child Survival Seminar" (21), in which the following introductory comments are made:

> Aboriginal children are being lost to their families, interned in institutions, or placed in unsuitable foster and adoptive situations which invariably break down. As a result a generation of disenchanted, alienated Aboriginal adolescents are appearing as a disproportionate percentage of the juveniles in state corrective institutions...
>
> Those with responsibilities in this area have become increasingly aware of the failure of white services and institutions to respond appropriately to the specific needs of Aboriginal people. The lack of sensitised policy on the part of housing, health, education and welfare authorities has resulted in nothing less than the break-up of traditional Aboriginal family life.
>
> In recent years, Aboriginal people have become increasingly concerned about the plight of their children. This has led to initiatives coming from the communities which have sought to establish family and child support networks which are Aboriginal in nature rather than white. (22)

(ii) Community Needs

Aboriginal communities throughout Australia are responding to changed government policies and practices by demanding, with increasing confidence, that they control and direct their own futures. As part of this process, they have recognised the need for a variety of social services which support and further these developments. Communities in such diverse places as Strelley, Hermannsburg, Alice Springs, Sydney and Melbourne, have all indicated that they see the development of appropriate educational services as being an integral part of this process of community development - that the construction and operation of services is a central component in the process of development.

These developments are recent, are still experimental, and have not been subject to any consistent research. Again, we refer to the Brandl report as an example of the kind of analysis which provides information on this process.

SUMMARY

In summarising this overview of the implications of research into the nature and purposes of Aboriginal childrens services, we suggest that:

(1) There is a substantial, but indirect body of evidence suggesting that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups throughout Australia assert a need for early childhood programs for Aboriginal children.

(2) There is no substantial evidence indicating the goals which Aboriginal communities or individuals would establish for such programs. A wide variety of goals have been referred to by individuals, or specific communities, but no systematic research has been undertaken to clarify these.

(3) The very large body of research which has been undertaken with Aboriginal children has not indicated any specific areas of deficit or need which can be confidently related to any of the goals established by Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people for early childhood services. We are not arguing here that those needs do not exist (anecdotal evidence suggests that they clearly do) but that available research has not identified them.

(4) Research into the health needs of Aboriginal children provides one area in which there is clear evidence of areas of need which early childhood programs may be able to alleviate.

(5) These are sobering conclusions when examined in the light of the very extensive body of literature available, the enormous amount of time and effort expended on this research, and the very large amounts of money which have been spent. However, these are conclusions which are supported by other reviews in this area.

There is a clear need for an urgent redirection in the nature of research into Aboriginal education, in order to ensure that this situation does not continue. We strongly support the suggestions provided by Watts, in her reivew, for directions in which educational research be restructured.

Finally, we return to our original question: Why do research at all? While the available research may have achieved some of the goals which we identified earlier, it clearly has not achieved the critical goal of utility to Aboriginal communities or individuals. The research which has been undertaken does not provide any clear information on the wishes or needs of Aboriginal people or provide guidelines for the future development of early childhood services.

However, we do believe that there is available indirect research literature which provides some useful directions for the future. The following chapter, concerned with the structure and content of early childhood programs, summarises this research and the implications which may be drawn from it.

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CHAPTER 18

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF PROGRAMS

In this chapter we examine the extent to which the research literature provides evidence or guidelines which may be utilised in the construction of programs. We examine the literature in two sections. The first examines research which is specifically concerned with the nature and effects of early childhood programs, while the second examines research which has been undertaken for other purposes but which holds significant implications for the development of programs.

1. RESEARCH INTO THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

The evidence available in this area is extremely limited. The four Bernard van Leer Foundation projects, together with action research projects at Bourke, N.S.W. and Katherine, N.T., provide the only substantive evidence relating programs and program characteristics to outcomes. However, for a variety of reasons, this evidence is of limited value.

In summarising the direct research into the outcomes of these projects, Teasdale & Whitelaw note:

> ... what can be concluded about project achievements on the basis of objectively measured outcomes? The answer is simple: very little indeed. The only reliable conclusion one can draw is that the activities of the Bourke,Victorian, South Australian and Queensland projects enhanced the language and/or cognitive development of the children participating, at least in the short term. And even this conclusion can be supported only to the extent that one is prepared to accept assessment procedures based almost exclusively on standardised testing. There is no firm evidence of the persistence of these language and cognitive gains beyond the first three or four years of schooling, nor have any data been published on the longer term effects of the projects on school achievement generally. (1)

However, they go on to note that subjective reports from staff, parents and primary school teachers suggest that there were positive outcomes from these projects. While we need to consider these comments with some caution (in that those making the comments were not exactly disinterested parties), Teasdale and Whitelaw suggest that such comments indicate that:

- some children within the program adjusted to primary school more rapidly, their speech was more appropriate to primary school expectations, and they attended school more regularly;

- parents became more informed about and involved in the education of their children;

- teachers' attitudes and perceptions underwent significant positive changes;

- teaching programs and materials were produced which have been used in a variety of contexts;

- community involvement may well have increased, particularly in the case of the A.F.E.C. programs;

- some children showed cognitive gains in specific areas.

Watts, in reviewing the same projects, lists a similar set of outcomes, although she also expresses concern at the lack of any effective follow-up research into these outcomes.

One further field of research relates specifically to this area. Maggs, et al. are quoted in the S.R.A. submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (Aboriginal Education) as noting that:

> The three year study has shown that the number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children who have learning difficulties can be markedly reduced by Direct Instruction methods. In addition, the implementation of Direct Instruction as basic programs in Kindergarten demonstrated that children begin Year 1 with reading skills in accordance with their chronological age. Furthermore, these children who have been taught D.I.S.T.A.R. reading skills for two or three years have begun to demonstrate reading comprehension skills in excess of their chronological ages. (2)

This research needs to be considered cautiously in the light of Watts' comments on the complex determinants of Aboriginal school achievement, the lack of longitudinal data on the effects of these programs, and the specificity of the goals, the Aboriginal communities, and the methods of evaluation. However, this is an area of research which has developed from the earlier compensatory programs and therefore should be noted.

2. RESEARCH WHICH HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Despite the scarcity of direct research, there is a substantial body of research and anecdotal writing, which provides useful insights for the development of early childhood programs. We consider this research under a series of headings.

Research into Aboriginal Child Rearing and Child Care Practices

There has been a substantial body of anthropological, sociological and, to a lesser extent, psychological research into child-rearing and child care within Aboriginal communities (3). This research indicates clear discontinuities between many aspects of the learning environments of Aboriginal children provided by their own communities and those provided in schools. These revolve around such issues as discipline, authority, inter-personal relationships, values and attitudes towards property, time, and so on.

The construction of early childhood programs clearly needs to confront these discontinuities directly, making decisions about the extent to which the programs are directed towards:

- replicating Aboriginal learning environments and socialisation processes within the program,
- socialising children into the behaviour patterns demanded of schools,
- determining the sequence by which such changes might be made, if they are to be made,
- attempting to influence primary schools towards incorporating the differences identified, and so on.

Clearly, the way in which individual programs use this information will depend very much on the goals of those programs. However, this is an area within which useful research information is available.

Research into Patterns of Aboriginal Child Development

There is limited research evidence available on the patterns of cognitive development of Aboriginal children. While a great deal of attention has been focused on the extent to which Aboriginal children perform on western tests of cognitive and psycholinguistic development, such research provides predominantly negative information. We know very little about the learning styles, cognitive strengths, linguistic skills, attitudes, values and self-concepts of Aboriginal children. As Watts describes it:

> In an overview article, de Lemos was able to point in 1979 to the relatively small amount of research that had been

> undertaken in Australia on school readiness and on the language and conceptual abilities of children on entry to school. In the case of young Aboriginal children the picture is even more sparse ... While there is information on their cognitive and linguistic functioning (in standard English) as evidenced on a number of standardised tests, we know relatively little about the children's cognitive styles, their competence in their home language, the world view into which they have been socialised, their motivational orientations, the reward/punishment systems to which they have become accustomed, their orientations to adults (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), or the ways in which they view themselves. Neither do we know in adequate or specific detail what the parents want for their children nor the developmental climate of their homes. (4)

However we do have some evidence on the significance of these characteristics, and the need for compatibility between these characteristics and school programs. Harris (5) provides one of the only detailed ethnographic studies of the contradictions between learning styles and expectations and characteristics of Aboriginal children, and those demanded of schools. This research, while sensitising readers to the issues involved, cannot be generalised very broadly, and certainly does not provide general guidelines.

However, it does underline the need for serious, ethnographic research into the mis-match between Aboriginal children's abilities and those demanded by schools, and the need for those designing early childhood programs to take a deliberate position with regard to these contradictions. Of course, again a number of positions is possible, and again these decisions will need to be related to the goals established for the programs.

Similar comments can be made with reference to research into the linguistic skills of Aboriginal children. Despite extensive research (6) we know little about:

- the language competence of young Aboriginal children who speak Aboriginal languages as the first language;
- the interactive effects of bilingualism on the development of language competence in young Aboriginal children;
- the detailed characteristics of non-standard English spoken by many Aboriginal children;
- the extent to which Aboriginal children switch language styles in differing contexts;
- the social/political implication of Aboriginal language usage (socio-linguistic analysis), although Harris' study does provide some information on the sociology of Aboriginal linguistic mores;

However, we do know that:

- Aboriginal children do not demonstrate a good command of standard English;
- standard English is expected in many schooling situations;
- major communication barriers are generated through these different patterns of language usage in schools.

Again, while few clear conclusions can be drawn at the moment about the relationships between Aboriginal linguistic characteristics and early childhood programs, the available research provides sufficient information to sensitise those designing early childhood programs to the many linguistic issues involved.

Early Childhood Programs and Aboriginal Community Structures

There is a substantial body of evidence relating to discontinuities between Aboriginal community structures and western institutions. Western schooling structures cut across many aspects of Aboriginal community structures, including kinship relationships, authority structures, male/female relationships, time perceptions, the use of physical space, and so on.

Again, the relevance of specific research will depend on the location of programs and the goals of those programs. However, this research does indicate both problem areas which those designing programs need to consider, and the directions in which solutions may be obtained.

The importance of these characteristics is stressed by an examination of the extent to which schools under Aboriginal control have been extensively modified to take account of these differences. Communities such as Strelley, Alice Springs Fringe Camps, Hermannsburg, and others, have constructed programs which, in attempting to reduce these kinds of contradictions, have become very different indeed from western school models.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In these chapters, we have attempted to identify critical questions which need to be answered by those constructing early childhood programs for Aboriginal children. In reviewing the extent to which those questions have been asked and answered, a number of conclusions may be drawn:

- By and large, the development of early childhood services for Aboriginal children has proceeded without these questions having been seriously confronted.

- The available research has not been undertaken in such a way that it can provide substantive answers to most of these questions.

- There is a substantial body of research which indicates (i) the kinds of issues which need to be examined, (ii) the kind of research which needs to be undertaken, and (iii) the kinds of answers which are obtained for specific communities.

- There are a number of existing programs, some under Aboriginal control, some within white systems, which are beginning to seriously confront these issues. These programs may well provide a basis for future developments in early childhood services for Aboriginal children.

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CHAPTER 19

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

In this chapter we begin by making some general comments about the nature of research into Aboriginal education, before raising some specific proposals. Inmaking these general comments we have been influenced by, and have drawn on, the recommendations provided by Watts in Aboriginal Futures (1).

We begin by reasserting our belief that the primary aim of this research must be to provide Aboriginal communities with the knowledge and skills which they need to obtain appropriate and acceptable early childhood services. We would also wish to recall the extent to which research to date has been fragmented, non-cumulative, and of limited utility. Our examination of the existing pattern of research leads us to similar conclusions to those drawn by Watts; that there is a serious need for:

- Greater control and direction over the nature of projects undertaken, (particularly with reference to under-graduate projects, and thesis work). We note that the N.A.E.C. is already attempting to monitor this.
- The encouragement of replication studies, across a variety of contexts, in contrast to the current one-off community specific projects which dominate the literature.
- The involvement of Aboriginal researchers, in the establishment of goals for research, in the design of projects, in the collection of data, and in the interpretation and publishing of such data. This involvement can only strengthen the validity and utility of the projects and the communication of results.
- Funding to be made available in a form which enables the development of longitudinal, multi-disciplinary and ethnographic research. Such research is expensive, and is not possible under present funding arrangements.
- Research to be sustained to the extent that "basic" research is followed through to the level of applicable useful knowledge: much of the present research ceases with the publication of initial findings, with few attempts to translate these findings into usable, tested knowledge.
- Results to be disseminated widely, in a useful, accessible format. A great deal of the research which has been undertaken so far either languishes in libraries as reports/theses, or is available only in academic and highly technical journals.

- An overall direction for research, to ensure that projects are cumulative, are relevant, and are usable.

We believe that these comments lead inevitably to the suggestions made by Watts that:

(1) A central Aboriginal Education Research Committee be established, with responsibility for directing, co-ordinating, funding, monitoring and disseminating results of research into Aboriginal education, and that

(2) A central task of this committee be ensuring Aboriginal involvement in this research, at the levels of membership and control of the committee, the establishment of goals and methodology for projects, employment in the projects as research assistants, directors, etc., and involvement in the dissemination of research findings.

We refer to Watts for further recommendations on the nature of this body, and patterns of funding for Aboriginal educational research.

We wish now to turn to specific suggestions for research needed for the development of early childhood services for Aboriginal children. In making the following suggestions we note that there is a great deal of research which needs to be undertaken within the field of Aboriginal education generally, much of which will have implications for early childhood services. It would be possible to generate a very long list of research activities which could be of specific use to those designing early childhood projects.

However, on the basis of the general comments made above, we feel that the following suggestions relate most specifically to areas of need in early childhood.

The Education of Aboriginal Teachers

We believe there is a clear and urgent need for research into the processes by which Aboriginal people may gain recognised qualifications which will enable them to obtain positions of authority in early childhood programs. This will demand research into:

(1) Selection : what are/should be criteria for selection into programs?

(2) Effectiveness of bridging/pre-tertiary skills training programs;

(3) Determinants of retention/dropout. What are the factors which lead to the very high dropout rates in these programs?

(4) Content : to what extent should normal programs be modified to take account of specific work demands of Aboriginal teachers?

(5) Sequencing : How can various training programs within States (tertiary, T.A.F.E., employer training, etc.) be most effectively combined to provide a useful, efficient sequence of study?

Alternatives in Early Childhood Services for Aboriginal Communities

There are both policy statements from many agencies and indications of intent from individuals supporting the view that Aboriginal communities should be able to obtain early childhood services which are acceptable and relevant to these communities. However, we believe that the implementation of such programs within educations systems is seriously impeded by a lack of information about what is possible or desirable. There are also many Aboriginal communities and individuals attempting to develop early childhood services who are seriously hampered by lack of information about what is possible.

As we have indicated previously, the range of individual and contextual variables which need to be considered in the construction of early childhood programs is very large, and the interaction between these variables is likely to be complex, and to vary across different communities. This complexity indicates that:

(a) Research into single sets of variables (e.g. cognition, language, self-concept, etc.) is unlikely to provide useful information.

(b) At the moment there is no broad theoretical framework within which program development can be undertaken.

(c) Any useful research which takes account of both the range of variables and the theoretical demands must be field-based, ethnographic, multi-disciplinary and longitudinal.

These considerations have led us to suggest two connected areas of research:

(i) An analysis of existing, Aboriginal controlled, early childhood programs.

We believe that existing Aboriginal initiatives provide valuable case studies, which should provide information about the goals which Aboriginal communities construct for early childhood services, the manner in which funding may be obtained for the development of these programs, the difficulties encountered in implementing these programs, and the manner in which the characteristics of these programs relate to the contextual and individual variables described above. We suggest that such research be undertaken by the communities themselves, with direction and co-ordination provided by a central agency, utilising mobile "research advisers" to ensure comparability of data collection, and accumulation and dissemination of results.

(ii) The development of experimental early childhood programs for Aboriginal communities.

As a further research strategy we suggest the development of a number of experimental programs, in varying contexts, directed specifically towards clarifying the issues identified in the previous section. This would involve a sequence including:

- Identifying the goals which the communities wish to establish for those programs.
- Constructing programs which, in the light of those goals take account of the range of individual and contextual variables described above.
- Continuously monitoring those programs in terms of their impact on, and relationship to, the patterns of development of children, the nature of parental and adult involvement in the program, the impact on community structures, and so on.
- Identifying institutional constraints and difficulties.

We would emphasise that the development of the programs and the nature of the research should be under direct community control, with maximum Aboriginal involvement in all stages. We believe that there are existing research models suggesting how this may be achieved (e.g. experience from Monash Aboriginal Study and Research Centre).

The programs also should be undertaken within a variety of contexts, to maximise the generalisability, or at least the utility of, information obtained. These contexts may include a range of different Aboriginal communities (perhaps from across the N.A.E.C. categories), within a number of States. It should be noted that some systemic programs are already attempting to undertake such work or at least provide contexts within which such work could be undertaken, e.g. S.A. (Alberton, Elizabeth), N.T. (Yuendumu, C.A.A.C.), Melbourne (A.C.C.A.) etc.

We suggest that this development, which would necessarily incorporate longitudinal, multi-disciplinary ethnographic research, be a high priority in the development of priorities for research into Aboriginal early childhood services. The particular needs of Aboriginal children who are a minority within systemic programs also should be noted. We have no information about the needs and wishes of the parents of these children, and no information about the nature of involvement of these children in programs, or the impact of these programs. This is a group for which rather different research strategies need to be developed.

Proposals for this Report

The present study exemplifies many of the criticisms which have been levelled at other research in this field, in that it has been undertaken by a predominantly non-Aboriginal research team, it is structured as a one-off, non-cumulative project, and it does not carry through to the provision of directly usable knowledge. We would suggest that consideration be given to ameliorating some of these criticisms by routinely upgrading the report, on an annual or bi-annual basis. This would involve the incorporation of material which time constraints have excluded from the present report; including new statistical and research materials as they come to hand; up-dating information on developments within each State and the Commonwealth.

We suggest that this could be achieved by allocating responsibilities for up-dating to specific institutions within each State, with the report continuing to be held on computer at Flinders University and the physical rewriting being undertaken there.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.S.	Australian Bureau of Statistics
A.C.C.	Aboriginal Community College
A.C.C.A.	Aboriginal Child Care Agency
A.D.C.	Aboriginal Development Commission
A.E.C.A.	Australian Early Childhood Association
A.E.F.	Aboriginal Education Foundation
A.F.E.C.	Aboriginal Family Education Centre
A.I.T.E.P.	Aboriginal & Islander Teacher Education Program
A.N.T.E.P.	Anangu Teacher Education Program
A.S.A.E.P.	Anangu School Assistant Education Program
A.S.T.E.C.	Aboriginal Studies and Teacher Education Centre
A.T.A.T.P.	Aboriginal Teaching Assistants Training Program
A.T.E.P.	Aboriginal Teacher Education Program
Ass.Dip.C.C.	Associate Diploma in Child Care
C.A.A.C.	Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
C.A.E.	College of Advanced Education
C.C.C.	Child Care Certificate
C.S.C.	Childhood Services Council
C. & K.A.	Creche and Kindergarten Association
Comm.Ed.	Commonwealth Department of Education
D.A.I.A.	Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement
D.A.A.	Department of Aboriginal Affairs
D.C.D.	(NT) Department of Community Development
D.F.E.	Department of Further Education
D.S.S.	Department of Social Security
Dip.T.	Diploma in Teaching
E.C.E.	Early Childhood Education
F.A.C.S.A.	Family and Children's Services Agency
H.S.C.	Higher School Certificate
I.E.C.D.	Institute of Early Childhood Development
I.E.C.S.	Institute of Early Childhood Studies
K.C.C.	Kindercraft Certificate Course
K.U.	Kindergarten Union

N.A.C.	National Aboriginal Conference
N.A.E.C.	National Aboriginal Education Committee
N.D.B.	National Data Base
N.M.A.E.C.E.	National Meeting on Aboriginal Early Childhood Education
O.C.C.	Office of Child Care
O.C.T.E.P.	Off-Campus Teacher Education Program
O.M.E.P.	Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescholaire
P.E.E.C.E.	Parent Education Early Childhood Education
S.A.A.T.E.	Survey of Aboriginal Access to Tertiary Education
S.A.I.T.	South Australian Institute of Technology
S.C.F.	Save the Children Fund
T.A.F.E.	Technical and Further Education
W.A.I.T.	Western Australian Institute of Technology
Y.A.C.S.	(NSW) Department of Youth and Community Services

INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES FROM WHOM INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED

QUEENSLAND

Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee
Brisbane Kindergarten Training College
Boopa Werem Kindergarten Association
Commonwealth Department of Education
Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland
Department of Aboriginal Affairs
D.A.I.A. (Department of Aboriginal & Islander Advancement)
Department of Children's Services
Education Department
Kelvin Grove C.A.E.
Kindercraft Association
Office of Child Care
Save the Children Fund
Mrs Margaret Henry

Professor Betty Watts
Mrs Rosalie Raciti

NEW SOUTH WALES
A.T.A. Program
A.F.E.C. Federation
Aboriginal Training and Cultural Institute
Commonwealth Department of Education
Community Activity Centres Network
Contact
Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Education
Department of Social Security - Office of Child Care
Department of Youth and Community Services
Family and Children's Services Agency
Family Day Care Association
I.Y.C. National Committee of Non-Government Organisations
Kindergarten Union of N.S.W.
Lady Gowrie Child Centre
Murawina, Mt. Druitt
Murawina Pre-School
Nursery Teacher's College
Save the Children Fund
Wunanbiri Pre-School

VICTORIA
Commonwealth Department of Education
D.A.A.
Education Department
Health Department of Victoria
Institute of Early Childhood Development, Kew
Save the Children Fund
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Wendy Lunt
Florina C.C.C. & Kindergarten, Shepparton

TASMANIA
Education Department
Department of Social Welfare
Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Australian Early Childhood Association
Aboriginal Education Foundation
Childhood Services Council
Commonwealth Department of Education
Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee
Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Department for Community Welfare
Education Department
Hartley College of Advanced Education
Kindergarten Union
Lady Gowrie Child Centre

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Australian Early Childhood Association
Catholic Education Commission of W.A.
Department for Community Welfare - Early Childhood
Department of Education
Lady Gowrie Child Centre

T.A.F.E.
Western Australian Association of Registered Child Care Centres Inc.

NORTHERN TERRITORY
Australian Early Childhood Association
Catholic Education Office
Department of Community Welfare
Education Department

A.C.T.
A.C.T. Schools Authority
Australian Early Childhood Association
Aboriginal Education Branch, Commonwealth Department of Education
Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (Dr. Maria Brandl)
Department of Aboriginal Affairs
National Aboriginal Education Committee
Office of Child Care

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